



Lincoln County

Running for Office – A Candidate's Guide

General Requirements to Ballot Access for County- Elected Offices in 2026

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RUNNING FOR COUNTY OFFICE: 2026

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For more information, call (719) 743-2444 or visit our website at www.lincolncounty.colorado.gov



INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on taking an interest in a county-elected position! This publication will guide you through the general requirements for each of the county offices and accessing the ballot either by Assembly, Petition, or Write-In. It will also provide you with information regarding the Colorado Secretary of State TRACER system for filing your financial paperwork as well as frequently asked questions.

We also encourage you to become familiar with the requirements of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.), Article XXVIII of the Colorado Constitution (Campaign and Political Finance), Title 1, Article 45 (Fair Campaign Practices Act), and Title 1, Article 4 (Access to Ballot by Candidates).

If you have any additional questions regarding your candidate qualifications, access to the ballot, or other requirements for running for a county office, please contact our Elections Division at (719) 743-2444, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or by e-mail at clengel@lincolncountyco.us.



General Requirements for County Offices

The elected offices of county governments are:

- Commissioner
- Clerk and Recorder
- Treasurer
- Assessor
- Sheriff
- Surveyor
- Coroner

All county offices other than county commissioner cycle onto the ballot in gubernatorial election years (Colo. Const. Art. XIV, §8). A majority of county commissioner seats cycle onto the ballot in presidential election years, and a minority cycle onto the ballot in gubernatorial election years (Colo. Const. Art. XIV, §6). All elected officers serve four-year terms that begin on the second Tuesday in January following the general election in which they were elected (Colo. Const. Art. XIV, §§6, 8).

Eligibility requirements applicable to all county offices:

Article XIV, section 10 of the Colorado Constitution states: “No person shall be eligible to any county office unless he shall be a qualified elector, nor unless he shall have resided in the county one year preceding his election.” This means that any candidate for any county office must be [C.R.S. 1-2-101 (1) (a), and 1-4-501(1)]:

- A citizen of the United States
- A registered elector
- At least 18 years old
- A resident of the county for at least one year before their election.

County Commissioner

Number of County Commissioner Seats

[Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 6; C.R.S. 1-4-205(2)]

County Commissioner seats are voted on at-large by all eligible Lincoln County voters.

- Lincoln County has three (3) Commissioner seats
 - Commissioner District 1 seat will be open for election in November 2026.
 - Commissioner Districts 2 and 3 seats will be open for election in November 2028.

Term of Office

4 years

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

Residency Requirement

Registered elector and resident of the district for at least 1 year prior to the election

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

Minimum Age Requirement

18 years

[C.R.S. 1-4-501(1)]

Citizenship

U.S. Citizen

[C.R.S 1-2-101 (1) (a)]

County Clerk and Recorder

This seat will be open for election in November 2026.

Term of Office

4 years

[Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 8; C.R.S. 1-4-206, 30-10-401]

Residency Requirement

Registered elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election

[Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 10]

Minimum Age Requirement

18 years

[C.R.S. 1-4-501(1)]

Citizenship

U.S. Citizen

[C.R.S 1-2-101 (1) (a)]

County Treasurer

This seat will be open for election in November 2026.

Term of Office

4 years

[Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 8; C.R.S. 1-4-206, 30-10-701]

Residency Requirement

Registered elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election

[Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 10]

Minimum Age Requirement

18 years

[C.R.S. 1-4-501(1)]

Citizenship

U.S. Citizen

[C.R.S 1-2-101 (1) (a)]

County Assessor

This seat will be open for election in November 2026.

Term of Office

4 years

[Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 8; C.R.S. 1-4-206, 30-10-801]

Residency Requirement

Registered elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election
[Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 10]

Citizenship

U.S. Citizen

[C.R.S 1-2-101 (1) (a)]

Minimum Age Requirement

18 years

[C.R.S. 1-4-501(1)]

County Sheriff

This seat will be open for election in November 2026.

Term of Office

4 years

[Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 8; C.R.S. 1-4-206, 30-10-501]

Education Requirement

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

Other Requirements

- Submit a receipt when filing the written candidate acceptance, evidencing that a qualified law enforcement agency took a complete set of fingerprints.
[C.R.S. 30-10-501.5 (1) (c)]
- 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.
[C.R.S. 30-10-501.5 (1) (c)]

Minimum Age Requirement

18 years

[C.R.S. 1-4-501(1)]

Residency Requirement

Registered elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election

[Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 10 ; C.R.S. 30-10-501.5 (a)]

Citizenship

U.S. Citizen

[C.R.S 1-2-101 (1) (a)]

County Surveyor

This seat will be open for election in November 2026.

Term of Office

4 years

[Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 8; C.R.S. 1-4-206, 30-10-801]

Residency Requirement

Registered elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election
[Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 10]

Citizenship

U.S. Citizen

[C.R.S 1-2-101 (1) (a)]

Minimum Age Requirement

18 years

[C.R.S. 1-4-501(1)]

County Coroner

This seat will be open for election in November 2026.

Term of Office

4 years

[C.R.S. 30-10-601 (1) (b)]

Minimum Age Requirement

18 years

[C.R.S. 1-4-501(1)]

Residency Requirement

Registered elector and resident of the county for at least 1 year prior to the election

[Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 10]

Citizenship

U.S. Citizen

[C.R.S 1-2-101 (1) (a)]

Education Requirement

Possess a high school diploma or its equivalent or a [Colorado Constitution Article XIV, Section 8; C.R.S. 1-4-206, college degree

[C.R.S. 30-10-601.5 (1) (b)]

Other Requirements

- Submit proof of a complete set of fingerprints taken by a qualified law enforcement agency when filing a written 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.

[C.R.S. 30-10-601.5 (3) (b)]



Ballot Access

If you are considering running for public office, you will need to become familiar with the requirements of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.), Title 1, Article 4 (Access to Ballot by Candidates). To view these requirements, visit the Colorado Secretary of State's website at www.coloradosos.gov.

All candidates for nominations to be made at any primary election shall be placed on the primary election ballot either by certificate of designation assembly or by petition [\[C.R.S. 1-4-102\]](#).

Candidates affiliated with one of the two major political parties may access the ballot in one of two ways. They can participate in the precinct caucus and county assembly process to *obtain party designation by assembly*, or forego that process and obtain *party designation by petition*.

Certificate of Designation by Party Assembly

- **Major Political Party**

- No person shall be eligible for designation by assembly as a candidate for nomination at any primary election unless the person was affiliated with the political party holding the assembly, as shown in the statewide voter registration system, no later than the first business day of the January immediately preceding the primary election, unless otherwise provided by party rules [\[C.R.S. 1-4-601 \(4\) \(a\)\]](#).

- Assemblies of the major political parties may make assembly designations of candidates for nomination on the primary election ballot. An assembly shall be held no later than seventy-three (73) days preceding the primary election [C.R.S. 1-4-601 (1) (a)].
- To be named as a candidate for designation by county assembly, a person must provide notice in writing to the county party chair no less than thirty (30) days before the assembly (unless otherwise provided by party rules) [C.R.S 1-4-601 (1.5) (a)].
- A candidate must receive thirty percent (30%) or more of the votes cast by the assembly [C.R.S. 1-4-601 (2) (a)]. The candidate receiving the highest vote shall be placed first in order on the ballot, followed by the candidate receiving the next highest vote, and so on until all the candidates designated have been placed on the ballot [C.R.S. 1-4-103 and 1-4-605]. The names of two or more candidates receiving an equal number of votes for designation by assembly shall be placed on the primary ballot in the order determined by lot in accordance with [C.R.S. 1-4-601 (2)]. Candidates by petition for any particular office shall follow assembly candidates and shall be placed on the primary election ballot in an order established by lot.
- If no candidate receives thirty percent (30%) or more of the votes of all duly accredited assembly delegates who are present and voting, a second ballot must be cast on all the candidates for that office. If on the second ballot, no candidate receives thirty percent (30%) or more of the votes cast, the two (2) 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) (a)].
- Candidates designated by assembly must file a certificate of acceptance no later than four (4) days after the adjournment of the assembly and may be transmitted by facsimile [C.R.S. 1-4-604 (3) (a)].
- If transmitted by facsimile, the original acceptance must also be filed and postmarked no later than ten (10) days after the adjournment of the assembly at the County Clerk's Office [C.R.S. 1-4-601 (3) (a) and 1-4-604].

- ***Minor Political Party***

- Assembly of minor political parties shall be held no later than seventy-three (73) days preceding the Primary Election [C.R.S. 1-4-1304 (1.5) (b) (I)].
- 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 for that office are placed on the Primary Election Ballot [C.R.S. 1-4-1304 (1.5) (c)].
- Minor Party Candidates cannot have been affiliated with a major political party at any time after the first business day of the January immediately preceding the general election for which the person was nominated, unless otherwise provided in the constitution or bylaws of the minor political party [C.R.S. 1-4-1304 (2) (c)].

Political Party Petition

Petition Requirements

- Designation of party candidates by petition [C.R.S. 1-4-801]
- Nomination petition formats must be approved prior to circulation by the designated election official [C.R.S. 1-4-903].

Signature Requirements

- Must be signed by eligible electors within the county commissioner district or political subdivision for which the officer is to be elected [C.R.S. 1-4-801 (2) (a)].
- Only eligible electors registered as affiliated with the political party for at least twenty-two (22) days and residing within the district for which the petition is being circulated may sign the petition; and the signer may not have signed any other petition for any other candidate for the same office [C.R.S. 1-4-904 (2) (a)].
- Petition requires the lesser of one thousand signers or signers equal in number to ten percent (10%) of the votes cast in the district or political subdivision at the contested or uncontested primary election for the political party's candidate for the office for which the petition is being circulated or, if there was no primary election, at the last preceding general election for which there was a candidate for the office.
 - An unaffiliated elector is not eligible to sign a major political party candidate's petition [C.R.S. 1-4-801 (2) (a)].

Additional Information

- Candidates by petition follow assembly candidates and are placed on the primary election ballot in an order established by lot [C.R.S. 1-4-103].
- No person shall be placed in nomination by petition on behalf of any political party unless the person was affiliated with the political party, as shown in the statewide voter registration system, no later than the first business day of the January immediately preceding the election for which the person desires to be placed in nomination [C.R.S. 1-4-801 (3)].
- No person who attempted and failed to receive at least ten percent (10%) 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 [C.R.S. 1-4-801 (4)].
- Party petitions shall not be circulated nor any signatures obtained before the first business day in January. Petitions must be filed no later than the close of business on the third Tuesday in March or on the seventy-fifth day in January, whichever is later [C.R.S. 1-4-801 (5) (a)].
- Petitions are filed with the County Clerk and Recorder [C.R.S. 1-4-907].

Petitions for Minor Party or Unaffiliated Candidates

Petition Requirements

- Nomination petition formats must be approved prior to circulation by the designated election official [C.R.S. 1-4-903].

Signature Requirements

- Number Required: The lesser of one thousand (1,000) or two percent (2%) of the votes cast for all candidates for that office in the most recent general election for any county office, signed by eligible electors residing within the district or political subdivision in which the office is to be elected [C.R.S. 1-4-802 (1) (c) (VII)].

Additional Information

- **Minor Political Party**

- No petition to nominate a minor political party candidate shall be circulated nor any signatures obtained thereon earlier than the first business day in January in the general election year [C.R.S. 1-4-802 (1) (d) (II)].
- Petitions to nominate candidates of minor political parties must be filed no later than 5:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday in March or on the seventy-fifth day after the first business day in January, whichever is later [C.R.S. 1-4-802 (1) (f) (II)].
- For general elections, no person shall be placed in nomination by petition unless the person is an eligible elector of the political subdivision or district in which the officer is to be elected and unless the person was registered as affiliated with a minor political party or as unaffiliated, as shown in the statewide voter registration system, no later than the first business day of the January immediately preceding the general election for which the person desires to be placed in nomination; except that, if such nomination is for a nonpartisan election, the person shall be an eligible elector of the political subdivision or district and be a registered elector, as shown in the statewide voter registration system, on the date of the earliest signature on the petition (for partisan election) [C.R.S. 1-4-802 (1) (g) (II)].
- Minor party candidates nominated by petition 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 for that office are placed on the primary election ballot [C.R.S. 1-4-1304 (1.5) (c)].
- Petitions are filed with the County Clerk and Recorder [C.R.S. 1-4-907].

- **Unaffiliated**

- No petition to nominate an unaffiliated candidate shall be circulated or any signatures obtained thereon earlier than one hundred seventy-three (173) days before the general election [C.R.S. 1-4-802 (1) (d) (I)].
- Petitions (for unaffiliated candidates) must be filed no later than 5:00 p.m. on the one hundred seventeenth (117) day before the general election [C.R.S. 1-4-802 (1) (f) (I)].
- For general elections, no person shall be placed in nomination by petition unless the person is an eligible elector of the political subdivision or district in which the office is to be elected and unless the person was registered as affiliated with a minor political party or as unaffiliated, as shown in the statewide voter registration system, no later than the first business day of January immediately preceding the general election for which the person desires to be placed in nomination (for partisan election) [C.R.S. 1-4-802 (1) (g) (II)].
- Petitions are filed with the County Clerk and Recorder [C.R.S. 1-4-907].

Write-In Candidates

- Must file an affidavit of intent stating the candidate desires the office and is qualified to assume its duties if elected [\[C.R.S. 1-4-1101 \(1\)\]](#).
 - Filed with the County Clerk and Recorder if it is for a county office.
 - Filed by the close of business on the sixty-seventh (67) day before a primary election and by the close of business on the one hundred tenth (110) day before any other election [\[C.R.S. 1-4-1102 \(1\)\]](#).

Filing Campaign Finance Information

If you are considering running for public office, you will need to become familiar with the requirements of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.), Article XXVIII of the Colorado Constitution (Campaign and Political Finance), Title 1, Article 45, (Fair Campaign Practices Act).

How to become an official candidate for campaign finance purposes

You officially become a candidate after making a public announcement and thereafter receiving contributions or making expenditures in support of your candidacy.

Candidate Affidavit

You will need to file your Candidate Affidavit with the Secretary of State within ten (10) days of becoming a candidate; file the form electronically by following the guidelines on the website. You will receive a login and password from the Campaign Finance department with further instructions on future filings. Email a copy of your Candidate Affidavit to the County Clerk: clengel@lincolncountyco.us or bring a hard copy to the office.

Campaign Finance Filings

Complete your campaign finance filings online with the Secretary of State. Visit the Secretary of State's website at www.coloradosos.gov.

If you have any questions regarding your filing, e-mail the Secretary of State Campaign Finance Support Team at cpfhelp@coloradosos.gov or call them at (303) 894-2200 and press 3.

Timeline for filing Campaign Finance Reports

Obtain a campaign finance filings calendar from the Secretary of State's website at www.coloradosos.gov under the Campaign Finance section.

Current Officeholder

If you have not yet decided to run for office in the next election, you are still considered a candidate while your candidate committee is open. Rule 3.1 requires that you file an amended committee registration within five (5) days of any change.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When are the 2026 Elections?

A: The Primary Election is June 30, 2026

This election determines each party's nominees for the General Election

The General Election is November 3, 2026

Q: What do I file at the County Clerk and Recorder's Office?

A: The following forms are filed with the Lincoln County Elections Division:

- **Copy** of Candidate Affidavit
- Candidate Acceptance
- Designation of Assembly
- Candidate Petitions
- Write-In Affidavits

Important! File Candidate Affidavit and Campaign Finance forms with the Secretary of State.

www.coloradosos.gov

Candidates for municipal offices must file with their municipal clerk in the city/town where they reside.

Q: Is there a timeline for filing my Campaign Finance paperwork?

A: Yes, obtain a Campaign and Political Finance calendar at www.coloradosos.gov

Q: Is there a deadline to file my ballot access paperwork with the County Clerk and Recorder?

A: Yes, refer to Title 1 Article 4 of the Colorado Revised Statutes; specifically, 1-4-601 (3) (a), 1-4-604 (3), 1-4-801 (5) (a), 1-4-802 (1) (f) (I), 1-4-802 (1) (f) (II), 1-4-1102 (1), and 1-4-1304 (3) and (4). Locate the 2026 Election Calendar at www.coloradosos.gov.

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

A: Review your voter registration record on the Colorado Secretary of State's website at www.govotecolorado.gov. Click on "Find Registration." The Lincoln County Elections Division at (719) 743-2444, mdutro@lincolncountyco.us, or rdavis@lincolncountyco.us can also verify your registration status and party affiliation.

Q: Who do I contact with questions about candidate qualifications, assembly paperwork, petition format, write-in affidavits, ballot access, or generally running for county office?

A: Always contact your political party chairperson first, but the Lincoln County Elections Division is also happy to help. Call (719) 743-2444, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or e-mail the county clerk at clengel@lincolncountyco.us.

Q: How do I obtain a list of voters in the district for which I am a candidate?

A: Contact the election office at (719) 743-2444, mdutro@lincolncountyco.us, or rdavis@lincolncountyco.us, and pay the appropriate fees.

Q: How can I obtain names of other candidates?

A: Visit the Secretary of State's website at <http://tracer.sos.colorado.gov/PublicSite/Search.aspx>. This option allows you to search by candidate name, committee, and jurisdiction. Enter the following information to search for candidates:

Political Party
Election Year
Jurisdiction
Office
District
Status

Q: Where can I find results on election night?

A: We will post results after 7:00 p.m. on Election Day at www.lincolncounty.colorado.gov.





Contact Information:

Lincoln County Elections Division
Lincoln County Clerk and Recorder

Website: www.lincolncounty.colorado.gov
Phone: (719) 743-2444
Fax: (719) 743-2524
E-mail: clengel@lincolncountyco.us
mdutro@lincolncountyco.us
rdavis@lincolncountyco.us

Colorado Secretary of State

Website: www.coloradosos.gov
Phone: (303) 894-2200
E-Mail: elections@coloradosos.gov

