



US Senate

2020 Candidate Qualification Guide



Colorado Secretary of State
Elections Division
1700 Broadway, Suite 200
Denver, Colorado 80290

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INTRODUCTION

This document contains an overview of the requirements for accessing the ballot as a US Senate candidate in Colorado.

Use this guide as a reference tool only. Always refer to the United States Constitution, Colorado Constitution, and Colorado Revised Statutes for applicable laws.

BASIC QUALIFICATIONS

Age	30 years [Article I, Section 3, U.S. Constitution]
State Residence	Yes [Article 1, Section 3, U.S. Constitution]
US Citizen	9 years [Article I, Section 3, U.S. Constitution]
Length of Term	6 years [Article 1, Section 3, U.S. Constitution]
Number of Terms	No limit [Candidates may voluntarily limit service to 2 terms per Article XVIII, Section 12a, Colorado Constitution]

BECOME A CANDIDATE

All candidates for US Senate should contact the Federal Election Commission for campaign finance information and other requirements not addressed at the state level.

Federal Election Commission
999 E. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20463
1-800-424-9530
Website: www.fec.gov

BALLOT ACCESS OPTIONS

ASSEMBLY DESIGNATION – MAJOR PARTY

Step 1: Eligibility for nomination

Candidates must meet the basic [qualifications for office](#).

A candidate must be registered as affiliated with that party no later than the first business day of January of the election year, unless otherwise provided in party bylaws. [1-4-601(4)(a), C.R.S.]

Candidates who wish to gain ballot access through the party assembly must receive at least 30% of the votes cast by assembly delegates present and voting for that specific office at the party assembly. [1-4-601(2), C.R.S.]

Proof of registration and affiliation qualifications will be as shown in the statewide voter registration system. [1-4-601(2), C.R.S.]

Step 2: Contact your political party

Potential candidates should contact their party to determine the exact date and time of the assembly. The political party will be able to answer questions about party protocol, announcements, party campaign rules, etc. [1-4-601, C.R.S.]

[Political Party Information](#)

Step 3: Assembly process

Candidates may be designated for the primary election ballot during their party's state assembly, which must be held no later than 73 days before the primary election. [1-4-601(1), C.R.S.]

A candidate needs at least 30% of the votes cast to be placed on the primary election ballot. [1-4-601(2), C.R.S.]

If no candidate receives at least 30% of the votes cast, a second ballot must be cast. If on the second ballot, no candidate receives at least 30% of the votes cast, the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be placed on the primary election ballot. [1-4-601(2), C.R.S.]

Step 4: Submit certificate of designation form

Complete the [Certificate of Designation](#) form. It must be signed by the chair or secretary of the party and be notarized.

Mail, hand deliver, email, or fax the designation form to:

Colorado Secretary of State
Attention: Ballot Access
1700 Broadway, Suite 200
Denver CO, 80290
Email: ballot.access@sos.state.co.us
Fax: 303-869-4861

The original or emailed/faxed copy must be filed with the Secretary of State no later than four days after adjournment of the assembly. If the form is sent electronically, the original must also be filed and postmarked no later than 10 days after adjournment of the assembly. [1-4-604(3), C.R.S.]

Step 5: Submit candidate acceptance form

Complete the [Candidate Acceptance of Assembly Designation](#) and have it notarized.
[1-4-601(3)(a), C.R.S.]

The Candidate Acceptance of Designation form must state the candidate’s name exactly as it will appear on the ballot. Candidate names may not contain any title or degree designating the business or profession of the candidate. [1-4-601(3)(a); 1-5-407(4), C.R.S.]

Mail, hand deliver, email, or fax the acceptance form to:

Colorado Secretary of State
Attention: Ballot Access
1700 Broadway, Suite 200
Denver CO, 80290
Email: ballot.access@sos.state.co.us
Fax: 303-869-4861

The original or emailed/faxed copy must be filed with the Secretary of State no later than four days after adjournment of the assembly. If the form is sent electronically, the original must also be filed and postmarked no later than 10 days after adjournment of the assembly. [1-4-601(3)(a), C.R.S.]

Step 6: Submit audio recording

Candidate audio recordings must be submitted to the Secretary of State no later than four days after the adjournment of the assembly. The audio recording must state the candidate’s name exactly as it appears on the candidate acceptance form, as this is how the candidate’s name will appear on the ballot. [SOS Election Rule 4.6.1]

[Audio Recording Instructions](#)

Step 7: Name placed on primary election ballot

ASSEMBLY DESIGNATION – MINOR PARTY

Step 1: Eligibility for nomination

Candidates must meet the basic [qualifications for office](#).

A candidate must be registered as affiliated with that party no later than the first business day of January of the election year, unless otherwise provided in party bylaws. [1-4-1304(2)(b), C.R.S.]

Candidates who wish to gain ballot access through the party assembly must receive at least 30% of the votes cast by assembly delegates present and voting for that specific office at the party assembly. [1-4-1304(1.5)(b)(II), C.R.S.]

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 ballot. [1-4-1304(1.5)(c) & (d), C.R.S.]

Proof of registration and affiliation qualifications will be as shown in the statewide voter registration system. [1-4-1304(2)(b), C.R.S.]

Step 2: Contact your political party

Potential candidates should contact their party to determine the exact date and time of the assembly. The political party will be able to answer questions about party protocol, announcements, party campaign rules, etc. [1-4-1304(1.5)(b)(I), C.R.S.]

[Political Party Information](#)

Step 3: Assembly process

Candidates may be designated for the ballot during their party's assembly, which must be held no later than 73 days before the primary election. [1-4-1304(1.5)(b)(I), C.R.S.]

A candidate needs at least 30% of the votes cast to be placed on the ballot. [1-4-1304(1.5)(b)(II), C.R.S.]

If, after the assembly, there are multiple candidates for an office (either because two candidates received at least 30% of the assembly votes, or at least one candidate has been designated for that office by petition), the candidates must be nominated by primary election. [1-4-1304(1.5)(c), C.R.S.]

Step 4: Submit certificate of designation form

Complete the [Certificate of Designation](#) form. It must be signed by the chairman or secretary of the party.

Mail, hand deliver, email, or fax the certificate of designation to:

Colorado Secretary of State
Attention: Ballot Access
1700 Broadway, Suite 200
Denver, CO 80290
Email: ballot.access@sos.state.co.us
Fax: 303-869-4861

The original or faxed/emailed copy of the designation form must be filed with the Secretary of State no later than four days after the adjournment of the assembly. [1-4-1304(3), C.R.S.]

Step 5: Submit candidate acceptance form

Complete the [Candidate Acceptance of Assembly Designation](#) form and have it notarized. [1-4-1304(4), C.R.S.]

The Candidate Acceptance of Designation form must state the candidate's name the way it will appear on the ballot. Candidate names may not contain any title or degree designating the business or profession of the candidate. [1-5-407(4), C.R.S.]

Mail, hand deliver, email, or fax the candidate acceptance to:

Colorado Secretary of State
Attention: Ballot Access
1700 Broadway, Suite 200
Denver, CO 80290
Email: ballot.access@sos.state.co.us
Fax: 303-869-4861

The original or emailed/faxed copy must be filed with the Secretary of State no later than four days after adjournment of the assembly. If the form is sent electronically, the original must also be filed and postmarked no later than 10 days after adjournment of the assembly. [1-4-1304(4), C.R.S.]

Step 6: Submit audio recording

A candidate audio recording must be submitted to the Secretary of State no later than four days after the adjournment of the assembly. The audio recording must state the candidate's name exactly as it appears on the candidate acceptance form, as this is how the candidate's name will appear on the ballot. [SOS Election Rule 4.6.1]

[Audio Recording Instructions](#)

Step 7: Name placed on 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 ballot. [1-4-1304(1.5)(c) & (d), C.R.S.]

CANDIDATE PETITION – MAJOR PARTY

Step 1: Eligibility for nomination and petition circulation

Candidates must meet the basic [qualifications for office](#).

A candidate must be affiliated with the political party no later than the first business day in January of the election year. [1-4-801(3), C.R.S.]

A candidate that attempted and failed to receive 10% of the votes cast for a particular office at the party assembly is not eligible to run by petition on behalf of the same political party and office. [1-4-801(4), C.R.S.]

Proof of registration and affiliation qualifications will be as shown in the statewide voter registration system. [1-4-801(3), C.R.S.]

In order to be eligible to circulate a petition, a person must be a citizen of the United States and at least 18 years of age. [1-4-905(1), C.R.S.]

Step 2: Petition signature requirements

Only eligible electors registered as affiliated with the political party for at least 29 days and residing within the district for which the petition is being circulated may sign the petition. An elector may not sign more than one candidate's petition for the same office. [1-4-904(2)(a), C.R.S.]

The petition must contain at least 1,500 signatures in each of the seven congressional districts. [1-4-801(2)(c)(II), C.R.S.]

Step 3: Receive petition format approval

Petition formats must be approved by the Secretary of State prior to circulation. [1-4-903, C.R.S.]

Contact the Secretary of State's Office at 303-894-2200 x6333 to learn about the petition format approval process.

Step 4: Start circulating petition

Once your petition format is approved, you can begin circulating the petition on the third Tuesday in January of the general election year. [1-4-801(5), C.R.S.]

Step 5: Submit petition and candidate acceptance form

The completed petition must be filed no later than the third Tuesday in March. [1-4-801(5), C.R.S.]

1. Complete the [Candidate Acceptance of Petition Nomination](#) form and have it notarized. [1-4-906, C.R.S.]

The form must state the candidate's name the way it will appear on the ballot. Candidate

names cannot contain any title or degree designating the business or profession of the candidate. [1-4-906 & 1-5-407(4), C.R.S.]

2. Attach the notarized acceptance form to the completed petition. [1-4-906, C.R.S.]
3. Mail or hand deliver together the petition and candidate acceptance form to:

Colorado Secretary of State
Attention: Ballot Access
1700 Broadway, Suite 200
Denver CO, 80290

Step 6: Signature verification, cure, and notice of sufficiency or insufficiency

Petition signatures will be verified by the Secretary of State. If found to be sufficient, the petition will be deemed valid, unless a protest is made in writing within five days after the statement of sufficiency is issued. [1-4-908 & 1-4-909, C.R.S.]

During the petition review, we will notify candidates of any errors or insufficiencies in the circulator affidavits. Upon receipt of such notification, candidates have five calendar days to cure the errors by submitting a new circulator affidavit that corrects the mistakes. [1-4-912(2), C.R.S.]

During the petition review, we will notify candidates of any signer signatures that do not match the signatures in the voter registration records. Upon receipt of such notification, candidates have three calendar days to cure the mismatched signatures by submitting a form provided by our office that is completed by the signer and a copy of the signer's identification. [1-4-908, C.R.S.]

We will notify you of your petition's sufficiency or insufficiency in writing. For a faster response, please provide an email address where we can send the statement of sufficiency/insufficiency.

Step 7: Submit audio recording

Candidate audio recordings must be submitted to the Secretary of State no later than the third Tuesday in March. The audio recording must state the candidate's name exactly as it appears on the candidate acceptance form, as this is how the candidate's name will appear on the ballot. [SOS Election Rule 4.6.1]

[Audio Recording Instructions](#)

Step 8: Name placed on primary election ballot

CANDIDATE PETITION – MINOR PARTY

Step 1: Eligibility for nomination and petition circulation

Candidates must meet the basic [qualifications for office](#).

A candidate must be affiliated with the political party no later than the first business day in January of the election year. [1-4-802(1)(g)(II), C.R.S.]

Proof of registration and affiliation qualifications will be as shown in the statewide voter registration system. [1-4-802(1)(g)(II), C.R.S.]

In order to be eligible to circulate a petition, a person must be a citizen of the United States and at least 18 years of age. [1-4-905(1), C.R.S.]

Step 2: Petition signature requirements

Only eligible electors within the district or political subdivision may sign the petition. An elector may not sign more than one candidate's petition for the same office. [1-4-802(1)(c) & 1-4-904(1), 2(b) C.R.S.]

The petition must contain at least 1,000 signatures in each of the seven congressional districts. [1-4-802(1)(c)(II)(A), C.R.S.]

Step 3: Receive petition format approval

Petition formats must be approved by the Secretary of State prior to circulation. [1-4-903, C.R.S.]

Contact the Secretary of State's Office at 303-894-2200 x6333 to learn about the petition format approval process.

Step 4: Start circulating petition

Once your petition format is approved, you can begin circulating the petition on the first Monday in February of the general election year. [1-4-802(1)(d)(II), C.R.S.]

Step 5: Submit petition and candidate acceptance form

The completed petition must be filed no later than 85 days before the primary election. [1-4-802(1)(f)(II), C.R.S.]

1. Complete the [Candidate Acceptance of Petition Nomination](#) form and have it notarized. [1-4-906, C.R.S.]

The form must state the candidate's name the way it will appear on the ballot. Candidate names cannot contain any title or degree designating the business or profession of the candidate. [1-4-906 & 1-5-407(4), C.R.S.]

2. Attach the notarized acceptance form to the completed petition. [1-4-906, C.R.S.]
3. Mail or hand deliver together the petition and candidate acceptance form to:

Colorado Secretary of State
Attention: Ballot Access
1700 Broadway, Suite 200
Denver CO, 80290

Step 6: Signature verification, cure, and notice of sufficiency or insufficiency

Petition signatures will be verified by the Secretary of State. If found to be sufficient, the petition will be deemed valid, unless a protest is made in writing within five days after the statement of sufficiency is issued. [1-4-908 & 1-4-909(1), C.R.S.]

During the petition review, we will notify candidates of any errors or insufficiencies in the circulator affidavits. Upon receipt of such notification, candidates have five calendar days to cure the errors by submitting a new circulator affidavit that corrects the mistakes. [1-4-912(2), C.R.S.]

During the petition review, we will notify candidates of any signer signatures that do not match the signatures in the voter registration records. Upon receipt of such notification, candidates have three calendar days to cure the mismatched signatures by submitting a form provided by our office that is completed by the signer and a copy of the signer's identification. [1-4-908, C.R.S.]

We will notify you of your petition's sufficiency or insufficiency in writing. For a faster response, please provide an email address where we can send the statement of sufficiency/insufficiency.

Step 7: Submit audio recording

Candidate audio recordings must be submitted to the Secretary of State no later than 85 days before the primary election. The audio recording must state the candidate's name exactly as it appears on the candidate acceptance form, as this is how the candidate's name will appear on the ballot. [SOS Election Rule 4.6.1]

[Audio Recording Instructions](#)

Step 8: Name placed on ballot

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; then the candidates are placed on the primary ballot. [1-4-1304(1.5)(c) & (d), C.R.S.]

CANDIDATE PETITION - UNAFFILIATED**Step 1: Eligibility for nomination and petition circulation**

Candidates must meet the basic [qualifications for office](#).

A candidate must be registered as unaffiliated no later than the first business day in January of the election year. [1-4-802(1)(g)(II), C.R.S.]

Proof of registration and affiliation qualifications will be as shown in the statewide voter registration system. [1-4-802(1)(g)(II), C.R.S.]

In order to be eligible to circulate a petition, a person must be a citizen of the United States and at least 18 years of age. [1-4-905(1), C.R.S.]

Step 2: Petition signature requirements

Only eligible electors within the district or political subdivision may sign the petition. An elector may not sign more than one candidate’s petition for the same office. [1-4-802(1)(c) & 1-4-904(1), 2(b), C.R.S.]

The petition must contain at least 1,000 signatures in each of the seven congressional districts. [1-4-802(1)(c)(II)(A), C.R.S.]

Step 3: Receive petition format approval

Petition formats must be approved by the Secretary of State prior to circulation. [1-4-903, C.R.S.]

Contact the Secretary of State’s Office at 303-894-2200 x6333 to learn about the petition format approval process.

Step 4: Start circulating petition

Once your petition format is approved, you can begin circulating the petition on the 173rd day before the general election. [1-4-802(1)(d)(I), C.R.S.]

Step 5: Submit petition and candidate acceptance form

The completed petition must be filed no later than 3 p.m. on the 117th day before the general election. [1-4-802(1)(f)(I), C.R.S.]

1. Complete the [Candidate Acceptance of Petition Nomination](#) form and have it notarized. [1-4-906, C.R.S.]

The form must state the candidate’s name the way it will appear on the ballot. Candidate names cannot contain any title or degree designating the business or profession of the candidate. [1-4-906 & 1-5-407(4), C.R.S.]

2. Attach the notarized acceptance form to the completed petition. [1-4-906, C.R.S.]
3. Mail or hand deliver together the petition and candidate acceptance form to:

Colorado Secretary of State
Attention: Ballot Access
1700 Broadway, Suite 200
Denver CO, 80290

Step 6: Signature verification, cure, and notice of sufficiency or insufficiency

Petition signatures will be verified by the Secretary of State and a declaration of sufficiency or insufficiency will be made no later than 96 days before the general election. [1-4-908(3), C.R.S.]

During the petition review, we will notify candidates of any errors or insufficiencies in the circulator affidavits. Upon receipt of such notification, candidates have five calendar days to

cure the errors by submitting a new circulator affidavit that corrects the mistakes. [1-4-912(2), C.R.S.]

During the petition review, we will notify candidates of any signer signatures that do not match the signatures in the voter registration records. Upon receipt of such notification, candidates have three calendar days to cure the mismatched signatures by submitting a form provided by our office that is completed by the signer and a copy of the signer's identification. [1-4-908, C.R.S.]

We will notify you of your petition's sufficiency or insufficiency in writing. For a faster response, please provide an email address where we can send the statement of sufficiency/insufficiency.

If found to be sufficient, the petition will be deemed valid, unless a protest is made in writing within five days after the statement of sufficiency is issued. [1-4-908 & 1-4-909, C.R.S.]

Step 7: Submit audio recording

A candidate audio recording must be submitted to the Secretary of State no later than 117 days before the general election. The audio recording must state the candidate's name exactly as it appears on the candidate acceptance form, as this is how the candidate's name will appear on the ballot. [SOS Election Rule 4.6.1]

[Audio Recording Instructions](#)

Step 8: Name placed on general election ballot

WRITE-IN

Step 1: Eligibility for write-in

Candidates must meet the basic [qualifications for office](#).

Proof of registration and affiliation qualifications will be as shown on the candidate's voter registration record. [1-4-501(1), C.R.S.]

Step 2: Submit affidavit of intent

File a [Write-in Affidavit](#) with the Secretary of State. [1-4-1101(1), C.R.S.]

The form must be filed no later than the close of business on the 67th day before the primary election or by the close of business 110 days before the general election. [1-4-1102(1), C.R.S.]

Mail, hand deliver, email, or fax write-in affidavits to:

Colorado Secretary of State
Attention: Ballot Access
1700 Broadway, Suite 200
Denver, CO 80290
Email: ballot.access@sos.state.co.us
Fax: 303-869-4861

Step 3: Name placed on eligible write-in list for the primary or general election**AUDIO RECORDING INSTRUCTIONS****Why do I need to submit an audio recording?**

In order to meet the required standards for accessible voting equipment, all county clerks in the state of Colorado must produce an audio ballot. The audio recording must contain the correct pronunciation of each candidate's name.

How do I submit my audio recording?

Our office has set up a voicemail box specifically for this purpose.

1. Dial 303-894-2200.
2. Dial extension 6314.
3. After the voice prompt, clearly state your:
 - Name (as it will appear on the ballot; it must match the name you provided on your candidate acceptance form)
 - Office and Jurisdiction if applicable (for example, State House District 5)
 - Party Affiliation (not required for the nonpartisan office of RTD)
4. Press “#” when your message is complete.
5. Follow the prompts to review/edit or complete/send your recording.

USEFUL LINKS

[Check your voter registration information](#)

[Political party contact information](#)

[Candidate information packets by office](#)

[Ballot access forms](#)

[Campaign finance information and TRACER](#)

[Cybersecurity for political campaigns—Belfer Center](#)

[Cybersecurity for political campaigns—Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions about accessing the ballot: 303-894-2200 x6333
ballot.access@sos.state.co.us

Questions about campaign finance: 303-894-2200 (dial 3 then 1)
cpfhelp@sos.state.co.us

Colorado Secretary of State's website: www.sos.state.co.us