

Chaffee County Clerk and Recorder – Lori Mitchell

2018 Precinct Caucus: Things you need to know

Colorado's Democratic and Republican parties will hold precinct caucus meetings March 6 in advance of the June 26 Primary Election. Voters interested in caucusing must be affiliated with one of the major political parties by January 8, 2018.

Here are seven questions and answers to explain the caucus process and how voters can get involved.

1. What is a precinct caucus?

Precinct caucuses are neighborhood-level meetings hosted by the Democratic and Republican Parties during even-numbered years in advance of a Primary Election. A precinct is the smallest subdivision of a county. Precinct caucuses are the first step for each political party to engage voters, select candidates for the Primary Election and decide on a party platform for the year. Locations vary, such as schools, community centers, churches and homes.

2. What happens at a precinct caucus?

Affiliated voters who attend a precinct caucus for their political party will make two important choices.

First, attendees will elect Precinct Leaders. These volunteers will represent the party in each precinct, serve on the County Party Central Committee, help get out the vote for party candidates, and assist with planning the next caucus. Attendees also will choose delegates to their Party's County, District and State Assemblies, where the delegates will nominate candidates to the ballot and approve the party's platform.

3. Who can attend a precinct caucus?

Only voters who are **affiliated with the Republican or Democratic Party** may actively participate in a precinct caucus for their political party. (It is unknown if any of Colorado's minor political parties will conduct a caucus or primary election.) Jan. 8 is the deadline to affiliate and Feb. 5 is the deadline to update your address if you have moved in order to participate in your precinct caucus.

Please visit www.GoVoteColorado.com to update your voter registration and/or affiliate with a political party.

Chaffee County's voter rolls include 3815 Democratic and 4982 Republican voters who may participate in caucus. There are also 5622 unaffiliated voters and 241 voters registered with minor parties who could affiliate as Democratic or Republican by Jan. 8 in order to participate in a caucus.

4. What happens after the precinct caucuses?

After the precinct caucuses, each major political party will hold County, District and State Assemblies. At the County Assembly, delegates will nominate candidates for county elected offices and approve the county party platform. At various District Assemblies, delegates will nominate candidates for Congress, the Colorado General Assembly, State Board of Education, Board of Regents and District Attorneys. At the State Assembly, delegates will nominate candidates for statewide offices, such as Governor, and approve a statewide party platform.

5. How do candidates get on the ballot?

A candidate who receives 30 percent of the delegates' vote at an assembly will appear on their political party's Primary Election ballot. Candidates who receive between 10 and 29 percent of delegates' vote may petition onto the ballot. Those with less than 10 percent are not permitted to petition.

Candidates who are unaffiliated or affiliated with minor parties must petition onto the November General Election ballot or become a write-in candidate.

6. How can unaffiliated voters participate in the process?

Unaffiliated voters may observe a precinct caucus, but may not participate.

However, for the first time in Colorado, unaffiliated voters will be eligible to cast a Primary Election ballot for any one participating political party. This is because Colorado voters approved [Proposition 108](#) in 2016. Unaffiliated voters will receive both the Democratic and Republican Primary ballots in June, and may vote and return only *one*. If a voter returns both ballots, none will be counted.

As an alternative, unaffiliated voters may declare a "ballot preference" before the June 26 Primary Election at www.govotecolorado.com and receive only one ballot for their preferred party. This will conserve taxpayer dollars, because counties will not have to pay printing and postage costs to send two ballots.

7. Where is my precinct caucus?

The Democratic and Republican Parties will plan the precinct caucus meetings and designate the sites. Locations are not yet publicized, but will be in the coming months. For information, please contact:

- Colorado Democratic Party, 303-623-4762 or www.coloradodems.org
- Colorado Republican Party, 303-758-3333 or www.cologop.org
- Information may also be available on County Party websites.

While the Chaffee County Clerk is not involved in the caucus process, we can assist voters with their voter registration and questions about the Primary Election. For assistance, please call 719-530-5606 or email LMitchell@chaffeecounty.org

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