

Ranked-Choice Voting

Voting made easy.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Ranked-Choice Voting?

Ranked-Choice Voting or "Instant Run-Off Voting," allows voters to rank up to three candidates, in order of preference, when marking their ballots. Ranked-choice voting eliminates the need for run-off elections, and is approved for use in Berkeley, Oakland and San Leandro.

Does my vote still count if I vote for the same candidate three times?

Yes. Your vote will count only once for that candidate.

Does my vote still count if I only select one choice?

Yes. Your vote will count for your one choice.

How are Ranked-Choice votes counted?

With Ranked-Choice Voting, if a candidate receives a majority (50%+1) of the first-choice votes cast for that office, that candidate will be elected. However, if no candidate receives a majority of the first-choice votes cast, an elimination process begins. The candidate who received the fewest first-choice votes is eliminated. Next, each vote cast for that candidate will be transferred to the voter's next-ranked choice among the remaining candidates. This elimination process will continue until one candidate receives a majority and is deemed the winner.

How Do I Mark The Ranked-Choice Voting Ballot?

The Ranked-Choice ballot card is designed in a side-by-side column format and lists the names of all of the candidates in three repeating columns. This format allows a voter to select a first-choice candidate in the first column, a second-choice candidate in the second column, and a third-choice candidate in the third column. Voters will connect the head and tail of the arrow next to the name of the candidate they choose.

Must I rank three candidates for each office?

No. A voter may—but is not required to—rank three choices for each office. If there are fewer than three candidates for the same office, or to rank fewer than three candidates, you may leave any remaining columns blank.

If I really want my first-choice candidate to win, should I rank the candidate as my first, second and third choice?

No. Ranking a candidate more than once does not benefit the candidate. If a voter ranks one candidate as the voter's first, second and third choice, it is the same as if the voter leaves the second or third choice blank. In other words, if the candidate is eliminated that candidate is no longer eligible to receive second or third choice votes.

Can I give candidates the same ranking?

No. If a voter gives more than one candidate the same ranking, the vote cannot be counted. Only one candidate can represent the voter's first, second, or third choice.

Can I write a candidate's name on my ballot in any column?

Yes. Each column provides space for qualified Write-In candidates. Only qualified Write-In candidates can receive votes. After writing the name of the qualified candidate, be sure to connect the head and tail of the arrow next to the space.

Will there be a subsequent run-off?

No, Ranked-Choice Voting eliminates the need for run-off elections.
