

Ranked Choice Voting: All Your Questions Answered!

**By Theresa Canter,
District Leader**

As you likely know by now, NYC will have Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in the Primary on June 24 (and in Early Voting starting on June 14) for local contests including Mayor, Comptroller, Public Advocate, Borough President and City Council in our catchment area. Also, on the flip side of the ballot is Manhattan District Attorney, which is NOT a Ranked Choice contest.

As a lead trainer for the Board of Elections (BOE), I am currently helping to refresh our poll workers on all aspects of Ranked Choice Voting so they can correctly inform voters on how to properly mark their ballot, if asked. A poll worker does NOT suggest candidates or give advice on how many candidates to vote for – so please do not ask!

How do you mark your ballot? Under the city's Ranked Choice Voting system, voters are allowed to rank as many as five candidates in order of preference, with their lesser choices being counted if their top choice is eliminated.

For each contest, voters will fill in the oval next to their favorite candidate in the “1st choice” column to the right. For their second choice, they will fill in the oval in that candidate's row in the “2nd choice” column. Voters continue the ranking process by order of preference, or they may rank just a single candidate. Leave the ovals next to a

candidate's name *blank* if you do not want your vote counted for that candidate at all in this election.

It's always one candidate per column and one candidate per row; otherwise, the voter will "over vote," and that column will be dropped in the post-election counting process.

Do NOT rank a single candidate more than once!

Why do we have Ranked Choice

Voting? In 2019 New York City voters approved a ballot measure that allows Ranked Choice Voting for **NYC primary contests only**: Mayor, Comptroller, Public Advocate, Borough President and City Council. It eliminates costly run-off elections that often have very low voter turnout. That could result in the selection of candidates who may not actually reflect voter preferences. In addition to saving time and money, an added benefit is that the threshold percentage of votes needed to win a seat is 50.1%. Previously, 40% was the threshold to prevent a run-off.

There are several ways that Ranked Choice Voting can benefit New York City voters. RCV works in all types of elections and supports election outcomes that better represent voter preferences. It aims to reach a consensus across the electorate with the winning candidate ending up with a majority of the vote. It extends the power of your vote: if your top candidate does not win the first round, you still have a vote in the second round, and so on. More diverse candidates

can win elections. Cities that have implemented Ranked Choice Voting have elected more women and more candidates of color, making their elected officials more representative of their communities.

How does the BOE count the vote? After polling closes, all the first-choice votes are tallied. If a candidate wins more than 50% of all votes in the first round of counting, that candidate is the winner.

But that is highly unlikely to happen in this year's Mayoral contest, considering that we have 11 Mayoral candidates on the Democratic ballot and 5 of them are polling less than 4%. RCV works as an instant run-off: if no candidate gets the majority of the vote, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, the second-choice votes for that eliminated candidate are then redistributed, and all the votes are retallied. This counting process will continue in successive rounds until a candidate wins more than half of the vote. In each round, the candidate with the fewest votes gets eliminated.

For example, how does this work with your ballot? If your highest-ranked candidate is eliminated, your vote then goes to your second-highest-ranked candidate. If your second choice is eliminated, your vote then goes to your third choice, and so on, until there are just two candidates left. At the end, the candidate with the highest number of votes wins. This process repeats itself until a candidate has a majority of the vote.

Because the club endorsed Brad Lander and Scott Stringer as the Mayoral candidates

who are the most qualified and who most represent our values, we ask you to rank them in the top two slots and then continue to rank three others in order of preference. The Three Parks membership also voted to NOT rank Andrew Cuomo on the ballot, and you would do the same for any other candidate who is not acceptable to you. You have the option to vote just for your 1st-choice candidate. However, ranking other candidates does not harm your 1st choice. If your 1st and only choice is eliminated, your vote will have no influence on the outcome of the election. You will have “exhausted” your ballot.

Please remember, if you rank your preferred candidate more than once (for example as your 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th choice), then only your first ranking will count. The BOE counting software will simply drop your choices in each column where there is an over-vote. So there is no strategic benefit to giving the same candidate multiple rankings! Also, do try and rank five candidates in the Mayoral contest to maximize your vote. Leaving slots blank is like not voting.

If you want to see your primary ballot, please go to: <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/>