RANKED CHOICE VOTING

CANDIDATE GUIDE

November 3, 2026 General Election

Multnomah Votes / Multnomah County

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Introduction

This guide, developed by the Multnomah County Elections Division, provides candidates with accurate, nonpartisan information about ranked choice voting (RCV).

The purpose of this guide is to help you:

- Understand how RCV functions.
- Communicate clearly and accurately with the public.
- Support transparency, voter confidence, and fair participation by utilizing official County resources to reduce the spread of misinformation.

A digital version of this guide can be found at multco.us/info/running-multnomah-county-office.

Ranked Choice Voting Basics

In November 2022, Multnomah County voters approved a measure to require the use of ranked choice voting (RCV) for all Multnomah County candidate contests. Starting in November 2026, Multnomah County voters will use RCV to elect:

- County Chair
- County Commissioners
- County Auditor
- County Sheriff

What is Ranked Choice Voting?

Ranked choice voting is a method of voting that allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference instead of choosing only one candidate. This method can allow your vote to count toward another candidate if your favorite candidate is eliminated.

Multnomah County uses single-winner ranked choice voting, also known as instant runoff voting (IRV), which operates as follows:

- Voters may rank up to 6 candidates in order of preference.
- If no candidate receives a majority of the vote (i.e. 50%+1) after counting Rank 1 votes for each candidate in the first round, the candidate with the fewest number of votes is eliminated and votes for that candidate are transferred to their voters' next-highest ranked active candidates.
  - If a ballot does not indicate any additional candidate rankings, the ballot is declared inactive and set aside.
- If a candidate in the second round receives a majority of the votes tallied in that round, they are declared elected. If no candidate receives a majority, the process of eliminating a candidate and transferring votes in rounds continues.

Additional information about ranked choice voting can be found on the Election Division's website.

RCV in Portland

As of November 2024, ranked choice voting is also used for all City of Portland candidate contests.

In early 2023, the Elections Division began a rigorous preparation and testing process to administer the first RCV elections for the City of Portland in November 2024, while laying the groundwork for a successful countywide implementation in 2026. The Elections Division successfully administered all six City of Portland candidate contests using RCV in the November 5, 2024 General Election. The Elections Division produced a final implementation report that details the preparation, outcomes and lessons learned from this first RCV election.

Where else is RCV used?

In addition to Portland and Multnomah County, several U.S. cities, counties and states use ranked choice voting to elect candidates, including: New York City; San Francisco; Minneapolis; Boulder, CO; Washington DC; Arlington, VA; Cambridge, MA; and the states of Alaska and Maine.

RCV Results Reporting

Multnomah County Elections is committed to providing timely, accurate, and transparent results for ranked-choice voting (RCV) contests, consistent with all other election reporting. However, the results will look a bit different. Here are the important things to know.

Where to Find Results

rcvresults.multco.us will be the sole source for RCV election results. The State of Oregon's Election Night Reporting site is not capable of displaying RCV results and will link people back to rcvresults.multco.us.

RCV Results Formats

Ranked choice voting results are tabulated and presented differently than plurality election results and so new results reporting formats will be used.

1. *Bar Chart Visual*

This bar chart allows viewers to click through the results, round-by-round, to see how votes were transferred.

City of Portland Auditor

Round 5

1 Seat up for Election

Threshold 168,259

Report Date February 12, 2024 9:51:00 AM

Click the arrows to see the vote totals by round.

Candidate	
Emily Evans	88,501 Votes | 26% (+3,276)
Maya Martinez	80,088 Votes | 24% (+2,185)
Henry Harrison	93,257 Votes | 28% (+12,014)
Jamal Jenkins	74,671 Votes | 22% (+1,095) | Defeated
Uncertified Write In	Defeated
Certified Charlie	Defeated
Certified Alice	Defeated
Certified Bart	Defeated

This report represents the complete mathematical process of tabulation and offers the greatest level of detail. The detailed tabular reports serve as the official reports for the final certified results.

CONSOLIDATED MULTNOMAH COUNTY, WASHINGTON COUNTY, AND CLACKAMAS COUNTY ELECTION RESULTS

City of Portland Auditor

UNOFFICIAL PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Contest	City of Portland Auditor
Election Date	November 05, 2024
Report Date	March 15, 2024 04:20:18 PM

Unofficial Preliminary Election Results

Henry Harrison leads in the contest. The election threshold and unofficial preliminary results are subject to change as additional ballots are tallied.

For more information about ranked choice voting results, please visit www.multco.us/rcv.

How the votes were counted, round-by-round.

	Round 1			Round 2			Round 3			Round 4			Round 5			Round 6			Round 7	
Leads in Contest																				Henry Harrison
Defeated		Certified Bart			Certified Alice			Certified Charlie			Uncertified Write In			Jamal Jenkins			Maya Martinez			
Election threshold in this round	173,255 votes			173,255 votes			172,163 votes			168,870 votes			168,259 votes			157,929 votes			153,279 votes	
	# votes	% of votes in round	votes transferred	# votes	% of votes in round	votes transferred	# votes	% of votes in round	votes transferred	# votes	% of votes in round	votes transferred	# votes	% of votes in round	votes transferred	# votes	% of votes in round	votes transferred	# votes	% of votes in round
Emily Evans	83,041	23.97%		83,041	23.97%	+1,092	84,133	24.43%	+1,092	85,225	25.23%	+3,276	88,501	26.30%	+12,799	101,300	32.07%	+46,437	147,737	48.19%
Maya Martinez	77,903	22.48%		77,903	22.48%		77,903	22.62%		77,903	23.07%	+2,185	80,088	23.80%	+16,094	96,182	30.45%	-96,182		
Henry Harrison	76,876	22.19%		76,876	22.19%	+3,275	80,151	23.28%	+1,092	81,243	24.06%	+12,014	93,257	27.71%	+25,118	118,375	37.48%	+40,444	158,819	51.81%
Jamal Jenkins	72,483	20.92%		72,483	20.92%	+1	72,484	21.05%	+1,092	73,576	21.78%	+1,095	74,671	22.19%	-74,671					
Uncertified Write In	19,791	5.71%		19,791	5.71%		19,791	5.75%		19,791	5.86%	-19,791								
Certified Charlie	9,863	2.85%		9,863	2.85%		9,863	2.86%	-9,863											
Certified Alice	5,459	1.58%	+1,092	6,551	1.89%	-6,551														
Certified Bart	1,092	0.32%	-1,092																	

View detailed, real-world examples of results reports from the City of Portland's November 2024 General Election RCV contests and find more information about how RCV results are tabulated and presented.

Preliminary Results Reporting

As with all other contests, the first RCV preliminary results will be posted at 8pm on Election Night. Results will continue to be reported as ballots are processed, with results becoming more clear as more ballots are received and counted. *Typically, 90% of ballots are received by the Thursday following Election Day.*

- Each preliminary update will include full round-by-round tabulation, indicating which candidate has reached the election threshold and is in the lead, based on the ballots received up to that time.
- Each preliminary update will be generated from scratch, incorporating all ballots received to date.

Final Results Reporting

The final results will be posted and certified by Monday, December 7, 2026.

Voter Education Best Practices

Research shows that voters are highly likely to learn about how to vote using ranked choice voting from candidates. As Multnomah County transitions to RCV in 2026, your role is crucial in ensuring that Multnomah County voters know how to successfully fill out their ballots and confidently express their support for their favorite candidate(s).

You can ensure that voters are receiving information that is accurate, consistent, and clear by adhering to the following best practices.

Best Practice #1: Focus on how to correctly fill out a ballot.

Our primary goal is to ensure voters understand how to correctly express their choices on a ranked choice voting ballot. We suggest explaining how to mark an RCV ballot using these simple instructions:
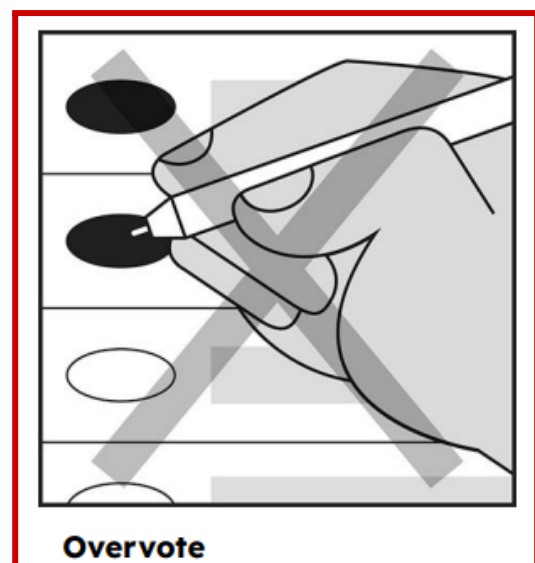
- Fill one oval in Rank 1 for the candidate you like the most.
- If there is a candidate you like second-best, fill one oval in Rank 2 for them, and continue for up to 6 candidates. You do not have to use all rankings.
- Ensure you have marked only one oval per rank and only one oval per candidate.

Communication Tip

If voters fill in only one oval per column (rank) and one oval per row (candidate), their ballots will be marked correctly. Encourage voters to remember: *No more than one oval per column, and no more than one oval per row.*
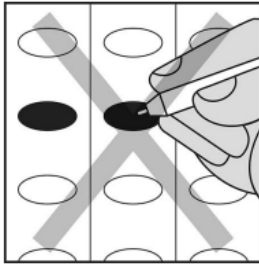

Common Ballot Errors to Avoid

It is critical that voters understand common mistakes to avoid so that they can identify and correct them before submitting their ballots. These are the three most common errors seen on RCV ballots:
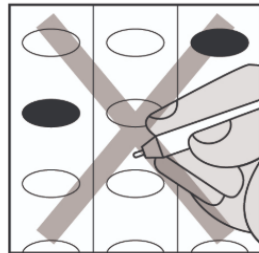

Overvote

Overvotes

Overvotes occur when a voter fills in ovals for multiple candidates in the same rank column. Since the voter's preference for that rank cannot be known, the overvote is skipped and the voter's next highest ranking will be counted instead. **Out of all voting errors, overvotes are the most concerning because it makes it impossible to count a person's vote towards any of the candidates selected in the overvote.**

Repeat Ranking

Repeat rankings occur when a voter ranks the same candidate multiple times in the same row. In this case, only the highest ranking of the candidate is accepted and every other lower ranking is ignored.

Repeat Ranking

Skipped Ranking

Skipped ranking occurs when a voter skips a ranking by not filling in a bubble for a column. In this case, the next highest ranking is elevated to the place of the skipped rank.
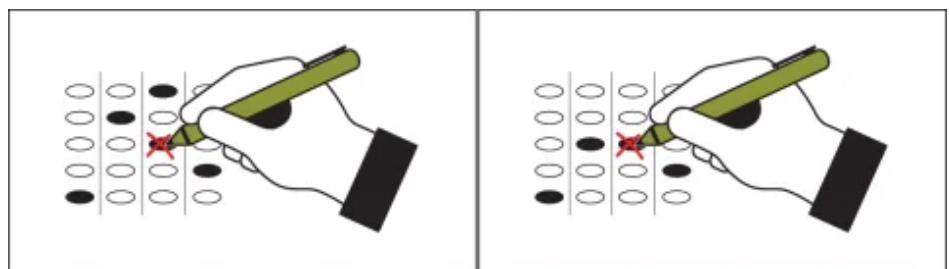
Skipped Ranking

Communication Tip

Voters have provided feedback that visuals in RCV instructions are particularly helpful compared to text-only explanations which are difficult to follow, especially for those who speak languages other than or in addition to English. All of **the images in this guide** are available for download.

How To Make Ballot Corrections

Mistakes will inevitably happen. It is important to let voters know that they can correct mistakes on their ballots without ordering a replacement ballot.

To correct mistakes, voters should place an X through any incorrectly filled-in ovals.It is critical that voters make their final choices obvious because election workers will inspect each ballot to make sure voter intent is understood and the ballot is counted correctly.

It is preferable that voters make corrections on their original ballot instead of ordering a replacement. However, if a ballot has been destroyed or has an error that cannot be corrected, voters can order a replacement ballot.

Best Practice #2: Give people the level of information they need.

Use the bite-snack-meal approach to make sure the information you share is digestible:

- A "Bite" is the smallest piece of information that tells voters the critical information they need.
- A "Snack" adds more context and is the "just right" level of information that most voters want.
- The "Meal" has nearly everything, in more complex detail. It's usually a webpage or a written voter guide.

> **Communication Tip**
> Start with the smallest piece of information that people need and add additional detail if they want to learn more. (i.e. Do not lead with explanations of tabulation, but be prepared to explain it if people ask.)

The Bite (A Quick Definition)

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is a style of voting where you can rank candidates in order of preference instead of choosing just one.

The Snack (How to Mark A Ballot)

Ranked Choice Voting is like a backup plan for your vote. Instead of picking just one candidate, you rank them in order of preference (Rank 1, Rank 2, Rank 3 – all the way up to Rank 6). If your favorite can't win, your vote automatically moves to your next choice. How to fill out your ballot:

- Fill one oval in the Rank 1 column for the candidate you like the most.
- If there is a candidate that you like second-best, fill in one oval in the Rank 2 column for that candidate. This is like your backup choice in case your favorite candidate has no chance of being elected.
- If there is a candidate that you like next best, fill in one oval in the Rank 3 column for them…
- You are allowed to rank up to 6 candidates, but you can still vote for only one if you prefer.

The Meal (A Deeper Dive into Tabulation)

Ranked Choice Voting contests are counted in rounds. In each round, a candidate is either defeated or passes the election threshold and votes are transferred.

1. **Round One:** Only first-choice votes are counted. If a candidate has more than 50%, that candidate is elected and the election is over
2. **Defeat:** If no one hits 50%, the candidate with the fewest votes is "defeated."
3. **Transfer:** The ballots of the people who voted for the defeated candidate are examined to see if they have a next choice on their ballot (aka a backup choice). The votes from the defeated candidate are then transferred to their voters' next highest ranked choices.
4. **Repeat:** This continues—defeating the candidate with the fewest votes and transferring their votes—until one candidate gets over 50% of the votes.
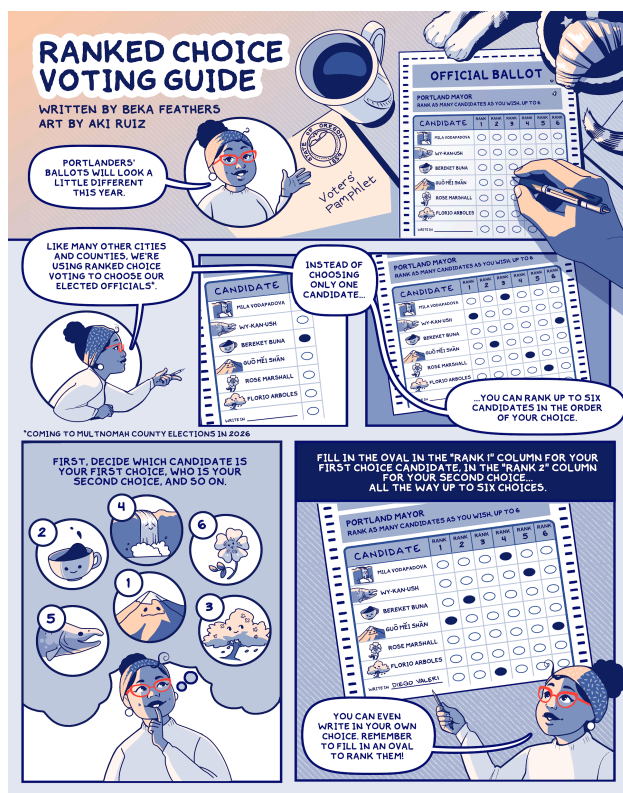
For an example of what single-winner ranked choice voting tabulation looks like, see the results for the 2024 Portland Mayor.

Best Practice #3: Make use of official educational materials.

To maintain clear and consistent messaging, and to ensure voters are well-informed, we strongly encourage candidates to share the County's educational materials. The materials have all been translated into the County's supported languages (English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Ukrainian, Somali, Simplified Chinese).

Comics

This 2-page comic explains how to fill out a ballot, identify mistakes, and make corrections.

You can download the comic in all languages.

Videos

These animated videos explain what ranked choice voting is and how to fill out an RCV ballot. There are two versions:

1. The longer version (approx 5 min) shows voters how to fill out a ballot and additionally offers an explanation of RCV tabulation.

2. The shorter version (approx 90 seconds) solely focuses on how to fill out a ballot. This video was created with short-form social media platforms in mind.

Votación por Orden de Preferencia
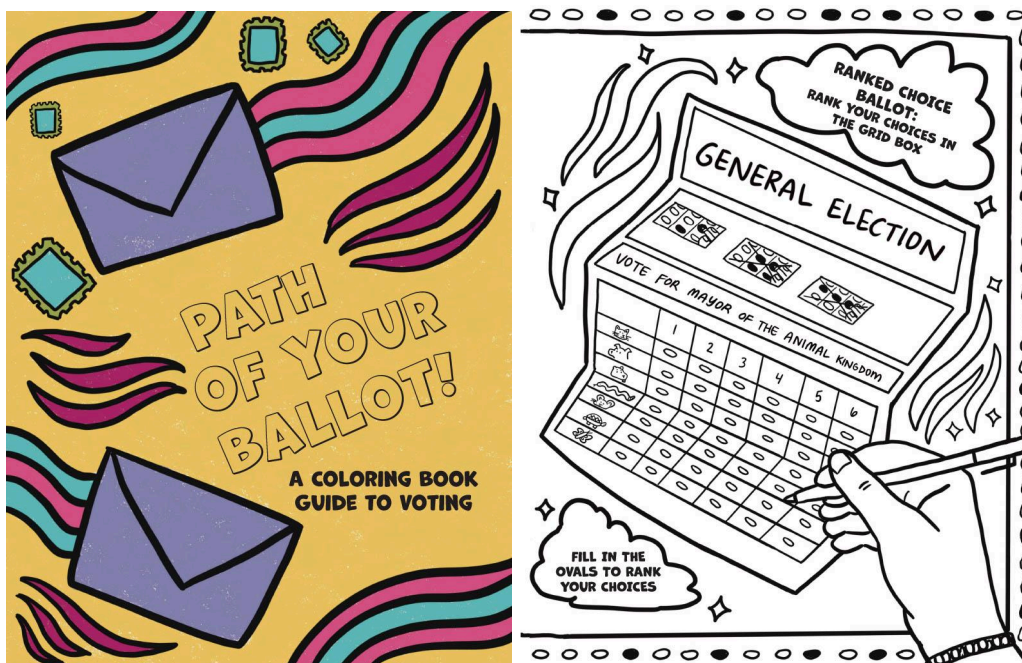**es un nuevo método para votar**

Ciudad de Portland

Votantes

Condado de Multnomah

0:13 / 5:07

You can access both the long and short versions of the video in all six languages.

Coloring Books

This coloring book is youth-focused, but appropriate for all ages. The pages explain the full process of voting by mail, including how to mark an RCV ballot.

You can download PDFs of the coloring book in all languages.

Voters' Most Common Questions, Answered

What is ranked choice voting?

Ranked choice voting is a method of voting that allows you to rank up to 6 candidates in order of preference instead of choosing only one candidate. This method can allow your vote to count toward another candidate if your favorite candidate is eliminated.

How is the type of ranked choice voting that Multnomah County is using different from the type of ranked choice voting that the City is using?

BITE: Multnomah County and the City of Portland use single-winner ranked choice voting in the same way. Ballots and voting instructions will be the same for both.

SNACK: The City of Portland uses both single-winner RCV (for Mayor and Auditor) and multi-winner RCV (for City Council contests, when three councilors are elected to represent a single council district). Multnomah County only uses single-winner ranked choice voting.

Why are we using ranked choice voting for Multnomah County contests now?

In November 2022, County voters approved a measure to require the use of ranked choice voting in all Multnomah County candidate contests by November 2026.

How many candidates can I rank?

There will be space to rank up to six candidates on your ballot. You can rank as few as one or as many as six. Ranking additional candidates will not hurt the chances of your first choice candidate.

Will my vote still count if I only rank one choice?

Yes, you can still vote for just your 1st choice candidate. Ranking up to six different choices for each office is optional and ranking additional candidates does not harm your 1st choice.

Can I give multiple candidates the same ranking?

NO. If you fill in the oval for multiple candidates in the rank column—for example, rank two candidates as your 1st choice—this is called an overvote and your vote will not count towards any of the candidates in that rank. Your overvote is automatically skipped over in the tabulation process and your next highest ranking is elevated to take the place of the overvote.

Should I rank the same candidate multiple times if I really want them to win?

NO. If you rank a single candidate multiple times – for instance for rank 1, 2, and 3 – this does not help them. Only the highest ranking that you give that candidate will be accepted and each lower ranking for the same candidate is ignored as if you had skipped that ranking.