



## **Ranked Choice Voting Information for 2023 Candidate Forums**

Thank you for participating in your local democracy! FairVote Minnesota, a nonprofit election reform organization, provides Ranked Choice Voting education to voters in the five Minnesota cities that use the system: Bloomington, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, St. Louis Park and St. Paul. Ranked Choice Voting will be used for your municipal elections.

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is a tried and true voting method in Minnesota. Minneapolis has used ranked-choice elections since 2009, St. Paul since 2011, St. Louis Park in 2019, and Bloomington and Minnetonka in 2021. If you have voted in prior ranked-choice elections, you may be familiar with the process of ranking your ballot. But if you are a new voter or just need a reminder, we want to explain how to mark your ballot and how the ballots are counted.

Under Ranked Choice Voting, you rank candidates in order of preference — 1st choice, 2nd choice, and 3rd choice — instead of choosing just one. In a single-seat race, if a candidate receives a majority (50% + 1) of first-choice votes, that candidate wins. But if no candidate earns a majority, then the candidate with the fewest first-choice votes is defeated, and these ballots now instantly transfer to those voters' second choices. This process continues until one candidate receives a majority of continuing ballots and wins. RCV works like a runoff but happens in a one decisive election.

RCV eliminates the costly, low-turnout, summer primary so that voters only have to make one trip to the polls, and all the candidates have the opportunity to compete on the ballot in November, when turnout is higher and more representative of the community.

Ranking your ballot is as easy as 1-2-3, and the more you rank, the more power your ballot will have in deciding the outcome. It's very important to rank as many candidates as you like — up to three in most cities (and six in St. Paul) — to ensure that if your first-choice doesn't make it through the runoff process, your ballot will continue for your second and third choices. Remember: Do not mark the same candidate twice, and do not mark more than one candidate in any column.

A couple of important things to remember as you listen to this forum tonight:

- Your second and third choices matter! But they will only be counted if your first choice candidate is eliminated. This means that ranking your ballot will never hurt your top candidate's chances of being elected.
- Ranking only one candidate or giving a single candidate your first, second, and third-choice vote does NOT help that candidate or make your ballot more powerful. If you choose to rank only one candidate, and your candidate is eliminated in the first round, then you lose the chance to weigh in and decide between the candidates in the final round.
- If you are strongly in support of a specific candidate, then we encourage you to listen for which of the other candidates could earn your second or third-choice votes.
- If you're a candidate, we encourage you to campaign to and welcome voters who may not support you as their first choice, but will support you with their second or third choice. Candidates who have the most success with Ranked Choice Voting are those who build a broad coalition, including voters who rank them second or third. This means focusing on the issues and not engaging in negative attacks.

Enjoy the debate tonight, and remember as you hear the candidates, to consider not just your first choice, but your second and third choices as well.

Please go to [rankyourvote.org](https://rankyourvote.org) or reach out to us at [info@fairvotemn.org](mailto:info@fairvotemn.org) if you have any questions or want more information.

Thank you.