

New voting method for mayor

Rank candidates in order of choice

In March 2005, Burlington voters adopted a new method of voting for mayor. The new method, called instant runoff voting (IRV), allows voters to rank candidates in order of choice: 1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice and so on. The new method only applies to mayor; all other races are unaffected by this change.

Do

Rank candidates for Mayor in order of your choice.

You may rank as many or as few candidates as you wish, but ranking backup choices preserves your voting power if your first choice does not make it into the instant runoff.

Fill in the oval in the first choice column in line with the name of your first choice candidate. Fill in the oval in the second choice column in line with your second choice, and so on.

Fill in no more than one oval per candidate.

Fill in no more than one oval per column.

For Mayor

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
JOHN ADAMS	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
THOMAS JEFFERSON	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ABRAHAM LINCOLN	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GEORGE WASHINGTON	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
write-in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do Not

Do NOT give the same ranking to more than one candidate.

For Mayor

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
JOHN ADAMS	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
THOMAS JEFFERSON	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ABRAHAM LINCOLN	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GEORGE WASHINGTON	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
write-in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do NOT give any candidate more than one ranking.

For Mayor

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
JOHN ADAMS	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
THOMAS JEFFERSON	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ABRAHAM LINCOLN	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GEORGE WASHINGTON	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
write-in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For more information about the new voting method:

- Visit the website www.BurlingtonVotes.org
- Call the city clerk's office at 865-7000
- Review the sample ballot published in the Burlington Free Press and available at the city clerk's office

Turn page over for answers to some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) About Instant Runoff Voting:

Q. What is instant runoff voting (IRV)?

A. It is a voting method that determines the majority winner, no matter how many candidates are in a race. By giving voters the option of ranking candidates in order of choice, it combines a regular election and a runoff into a single election.

Q. Does a first choice count twice as much as a second choice, or what?

A. No. IRV doesn't work like that at all. Your ballot only counts for one candidate in any round of counting. Your ballot will count only for your 1st choice as long as that candidate remains in the race. But if that candidate gets eliminated in a runoff count, your vote will count for your 2nd choice, and if your second choice gets eliminated, your ballot will count for your third choice, etc.

Q. How are the votes counted to determine the winner?

A. If one candidate receives a majority of first preferences, that candidate is elected. However, if no candidate is the first choice of at least half the voters, the instant runoff retabulation will be performed. The candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated. In the next round, every ballot then counts as a single vote for each voter's preferred candidate who has not been eliminated. In other words, if your favorite candidate is still in the running your ballot will count for that person in this runoff round as well, but if your favorite candidate has been eliminated in the runoff, your ballot automatically counts for your next choice. This process of eliminating candidates and retabulating the votes continues until just two candidates remain. Whichever of these two finalists has the most votes is the winner.

Q. Can ranking a second or third choice hurt my favorite candidate?

A. No. Your vote counts exclusively for your first choice as long as that candidate has any chance of winning. Your second, third choice, etc. are your back-up runoff choices. Your ballot only counts for your 2nd choice if your 1st choice does not make it into the runoff.

Q. What if I don't want to rank candidates? I might not know much about some of them. What if I only like one candidate?

A. You are free to vote for only one candidate. However, if you have any preference among the other candidates, then it's in your best interest to rank additional candidates (in case your favorite does not make it into the final runoff). But if you only want to rank one candidate, your vote will be valid and will count for that candidate.

Q. What if my favorite candidate gets eliminated in the runoff count, but I haven't ranked any alternate choices?

A. Then your ballot doesn't count in the runoff. This is like voting in the first round of an election but not coming back for the runoff. That's why it's in your best interest to rank as many candidates as you have an opinion about, rather than voting for just your favorite candidate.

Q. Can I give the same ranking to several candidates if I like them equally well?

A. No. If you give the same ranking to more than one candidate, your ballot will be invalid when that ranking is reached, unless only one of the candidates is still in the race, in which case your vote will count for that candidate.

Q. What if I only rank my favorite candidate, giving that candidate both my first and second choice?

A. Ranking the same candidate more than once does not help that candidate. Your vote will count for that candidate unless that candidate gets eliminated in a runoff. If your favorite gets eliminated, but you gave that same candidate your second ranking, since that candidate is now out of the running, you are effectively sitting out the runoff between the finalists.

Q. Does IRV give some voters more votes than others? Does it violate "one person -- one vote" principle?

A. No. Every voter gets an equal vote. In every round of counting, every ballot counts as one vote for the highest-ranked candidate still in the running. If your candidate is still viable, your vote will count for your favorite candidate in the runoff round. If your candidate has been eliminated, just as in a traditional runoff election, you need to settle for one of the remaining candidates. Your vote automatically counts for whichever continuing candidate you prefer. The mistaken impression that some voters get more votes than others was the basis for a legal challenge to IRV in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The court ruled that IRV fully complied with the principle of "one person, one vote." The judge wrote in his decision:

"Under the [IRV system], however, no one person or voter has more than one effective vote for one office. No voter's vote can be counted more than once for the same candidate. In the final analysis, no voter is given greater weight in his or her vote over the vote of another voter, although to understand this does require a conceptual understanding of how the effect of a "[IRV] System" is like that of a run-off election. The form of majority preferential voting employed in the City of Ann Arbor's election of its Mayor does not violate the one-man, one-vote mandate nor does it deprive anyone of equal protection rights under the Michigan or United States Constitutions."