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.

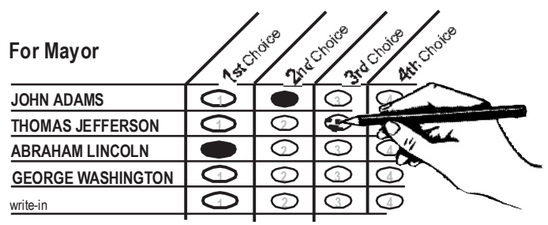
Do

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.

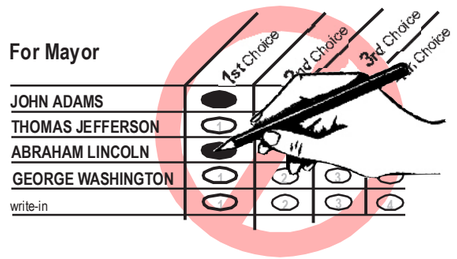
Fill in the oval in the first choice column in line with the name of your first choice candidate. Fill in the oval in the second choice column in line with your second choice, and so on.

Fill in no more than one oval per candidate.
Fill in no more than one oval per column.

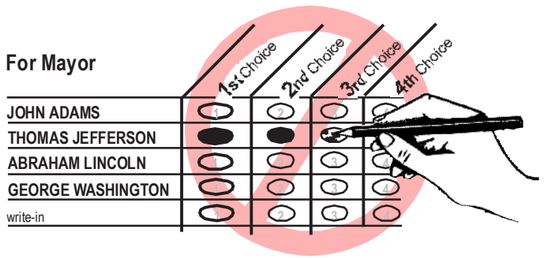


Do Not

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



Do NOT give any candidate more than one ranking.



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.

For more information visit
www.BurlingtonVotes.org
or call **865-7000**

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."

PERMANENT portion for future use:

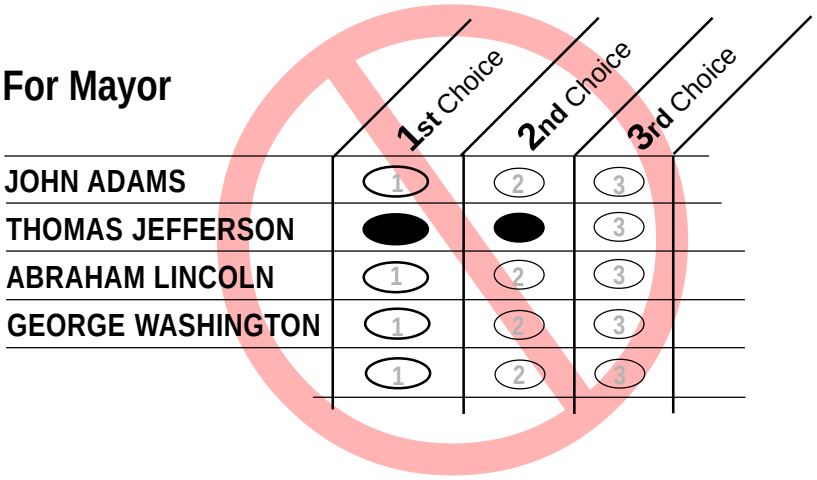
Error message: **“MULTI-VOTED CAND”**

This ballot has been ejected because you gave **more than one rankings to the same candidate**. An example would be voting for the same candidates as a 1st choice and as a 2nd choice.

Only one vote will be counted for this candidate.**You can get a replacement ballot if you want to correct this.** If you do not wish to mark a new ballot, you can submit the ballot “as is” and it will be a valid vote for mayor.

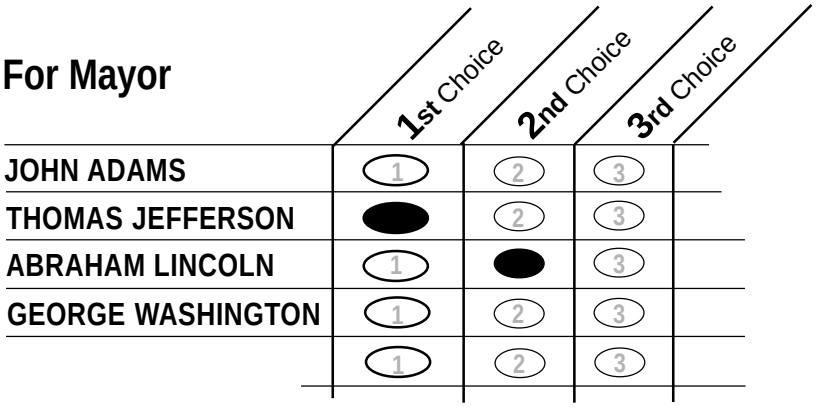
Wrong:

Filling in more than one oval for the same candidate.



Right:

No more than one oval per candidate and one oval per column.



Error message: **“DUPLICATE VOTED”**

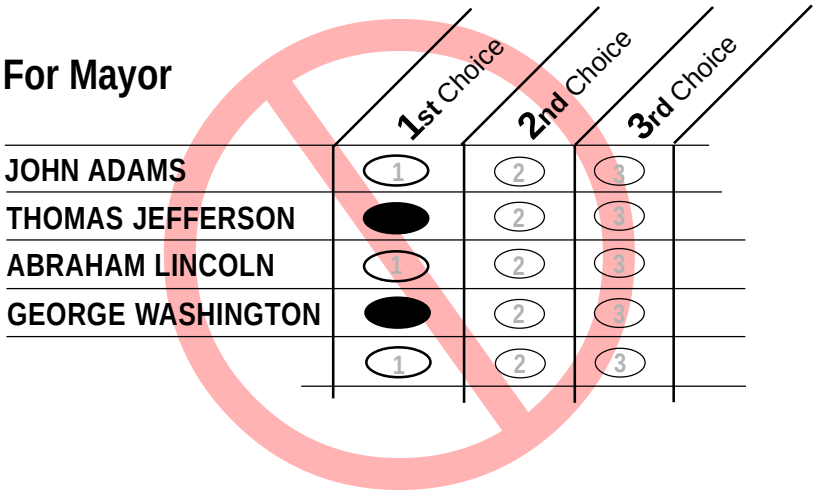
This ballot has been ejected because you filled in ovals for **more than one candidate for a particular choice**. An example would be voting for two different candidates as 1st choices.

A duplicate vote for 1st choice is an invalid vote that will not count for mayor. A duplicate vote for 2nd or 3rd choice may exhaust the ballot when that duplicate rankings is reached, but the 1st choice will remain a valid vote.

You have the option of requesting another ballot to correct the situation. If you do not wish to mark a new ballot, you can submit the ballot “as is,” but it may be an invalid vote for mayor.

Wrong:

Filling in more than one oval in the same column.



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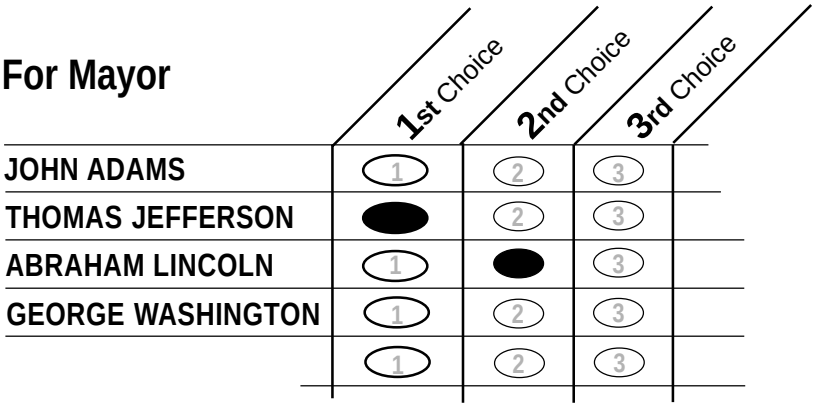


NEW THIS YEAR!

Instant Runoff Voting for Mayor

as approved by Burlington
voters in March 2005

Annual City Election
MARCH 7, 2006

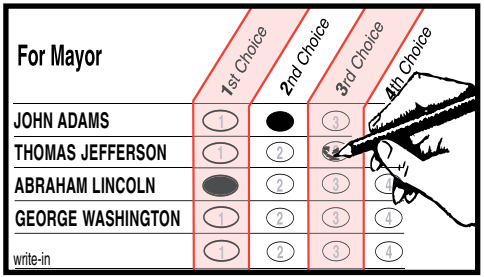
This year you'll notice a change on the City ballot. You'll be able to RANK THE CANDIDATES FOR MAYOR in the order of your choice (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and so on). This is called *Instant Runoff Voting*, a system that combines a regular election and a runoff (should one be necessary) into a single election. The process will save the City money—and save voters hassle—by avoiding the need for another election if no candidate for Mayor receives more than 50% of the vote on March 7.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

Simply mark the oval in the *1st Choice* column next to your first choice for Mayor. Then, if you choose, you may fill in ovals for your second choice, third choice, etc. You cannot rank the same candidate more than once.

Office of the City Clerk
City of Burlington
149 Church St.
Burlington, VT 05401

IF NO CANDIDATE IS THE FIRST CHOICE OF MORE THAN 50% OF THE VOTERS, THERE IS AN INSTANT RUNOFF. Your ballot will count only for your first choice if that candidate is among the top two vote-getters and therefore in the runoff. If your first choice does *not* make it into the runoff, however, your *second* choice is counted as your vote in that round. If your second choice becomes eliminated from the race, your ballot will count for your third choice, and so on.



IT'S YOUR CHOICE. You may rank as few or as many candidates as you wish, but ranking your backup choices preserves your voting power if there is a runoff and your top choice is no longer in the running.

FOR MORE INFO: www.burlington votes.org OR **865-7000**

Not registered to vote? Need an absentee ballot?
Want to vote early by mail? Call us at 865-7000!

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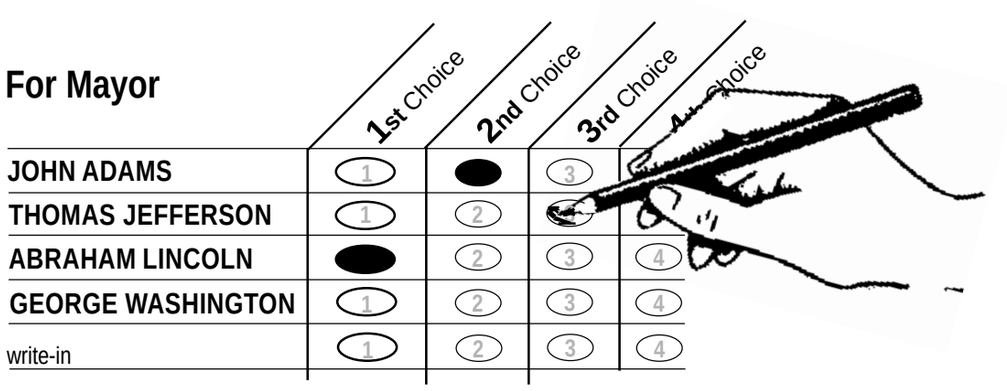

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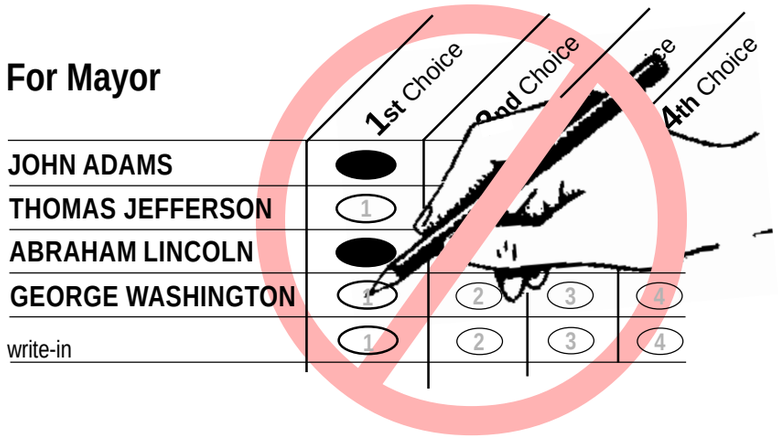
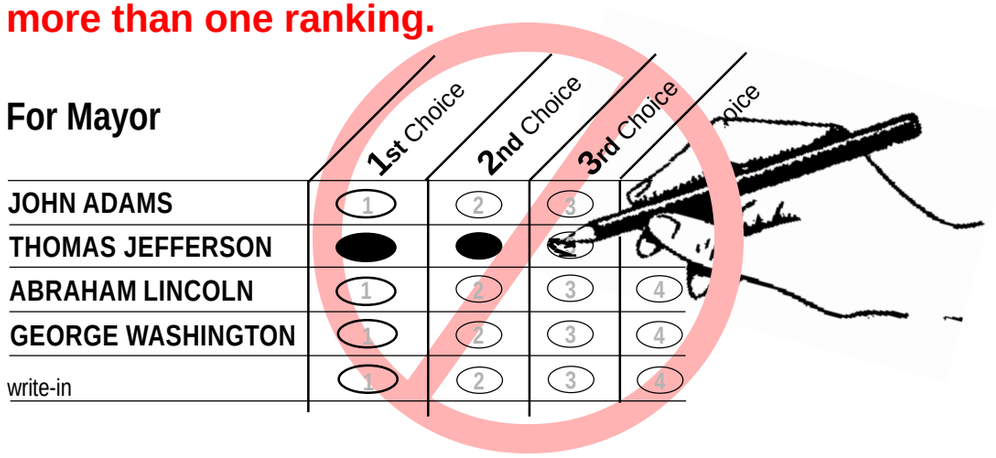
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