



Rank the District

Grow Democracy DC
Civic Education Fund

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ballots Drop for Washington, DC's First Ranked Choice Voting Election

May 11, 2026 – Today, the Board of Elections will begin mailing ballots for Washington, DC's first ranked choice voting election. Ranked choice voting passed with 73% of the vote in 2024 as part of Initiative 83, which also included a provision to let independents vote in DC's primary elections.

The [Rank the District](#) project blossomed from the Initiative 83 ballot measure. Rank the District has led voter education efforts across the District to ensure that DC voters are ready to rank their ballots.

Ranked choice voting experts available for interviews include:

- [Lisa D.T. Rice](#) - Project Lead, Grow Democracy DC Civic Education Fund
- [Kenyatta Smith](#) - Engagement & Outreach Director, Grow Democracy DC Civic Education Fund
- [Deb Otis](#) - Director of Research and Policy at FairVote. [FairVote](#) has studied ranked choice voting elections since 1992, and is an expert on RCV implementation and uses across the country.

Rank the District has hosted over 100 voter education events in recent months – with a focus on reaching voters in Wards 1, 5, 7, and 8, as well as senior centers. Rank the District has also led trainings for candidates and League of Women Voters volunteers; canvassed at farmers markets and major DC events like the H Street Festival and Emancipation Day Celebration; and hired 25 field organizers to lead community outreach in the last six weeks before the primary. [Rank the District](#) is the public education campaign of Grow Democracy DC Civic Education Fund.

Rank the District's work supplements the DC Board of Elections, which has produced a full implementation plan and has [conducted](#) 130 outreach events, including town halls, visits to ANC and Ward-level party meetings, and an ongoing webinar series.

This is a major election year for Washington, DC and its first use of ranked choice voting – with crowded fields running in open-seat races for mayor, congressional delegate, at-large councilmember, and Ward 1 councilmember. Ranked choice voting ensures a majority winner in a crowded field, and lets voters rank their favorites without worrying about “wasting” their vote.

Additional Resources:

- [Rank the District](#)

- [How to rank your ballot](#)
 - [Rank the District videos](#)
- [DC Board of Elections Ranked Choice Voting page](#)
- FairVote:
 - [Where RCV is used](#)
 - [RCV exit polling](#)
 - [Ranked Choice Voting Candidate Strategy Guide](#)
 - [Impact of cross-endorsements in ranked choice voting elections](#)
- [The 51st/Bolts Magazine](#): DC gears up for first ranked-choice election with citywide voter education effort
- [DC News Now](#): Ward 1 council candidates cross-endorse each other
- [Ben's Chili Bowl ranked choice voting explainer video](#)
- [Outvote DC](#): Rank the Divas

Full description of how votes are counted in a ranked choice voting election:

Voters can rank candidates in order of preference: first, second, third and so on.

If a candidate receives more than half of the first choices, that candidate wins, just like in any other election. If not, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated. Voters who ranked that candidate “number 1” will have their vote count for their next choice. This repeats until a candidate wins with more than 50% of the votes.

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