City of Boulder's 2023 Election Changes

Welcome – Bienvenid@

Special Presenters
Boulder City Clerk **Elesha Johnson**
Boulder County Clerk **Molly Fitzpatrick**

Rosabelle Rice - Interpretación en español

Thank you to this event's financial sponsor!

City of Boulder's 2023 Election Changes

Agenda

LWVBC: Mark Parsons – **Introduction**

Boulder City Clerk Elesha Johnson

Mayoral and Council Election Changes

Boulder County Clerk Molly Fitzpatrick

Ranked Choice Voting (Instant Runoff)

LWVBC: Celeste Landry

Tabulate sample Instant-Runoff Voting election

Impacts of the city election changes

Meeting Logistics

Restroom locations

Sign-in table

- Ranked choice voting (instant runoff) ballots

Information table

- LWVBC Voting Methods Team materials
- Voter registration/services information

Q & A process – for clerks, use index cards

Recording of this event

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF BOULDER COUNTY

The League of Women Voters (LWV)

Mission: **LWV works to empower voters and defend democracy**

- – not for women only!
- – political but nonpartisan
  - – never endorses candidates or political parties
  - – does take stands on ballot measures

Our advocacy is based on our program positions *which are developed after study and consensus!*

Ballot Issue and Candidate Forums

Vote 411.org – about the candidates and issues on <u>your</u> ballot

Clerks and LWV of Boulder County: Different Roles

The Boulder City and County Clerks run our elections according to city and state rules. They are neutral on whether one voting method is better than another voting method.

LWVBC is an educational advocacy organization, wants voters to cast informed ballots, and may use phrases such as "better voting methods."

Both the Clerks and LWV want you to cast a valid vote, but remain neutral on which candidate(s) you support.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF BOULDER COUNTY

In 2012 LWVBC created its Voting Methods Team

A voting method defines

- the form of the ballot contest and how to cast a valid vote
- how to count the votes and determine the outcome

2023: City of Boulder will use 2 different voting methods

- Mayor: RANK up to 4 candidates. One is elected.
- Council: VOTE for up to 4 candidates. Four or possibly five are elected.

See the LWVBC tri-fold pamphlets* on different voting methods!

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF BOULDER COUNTY

LWVBC on Voting Methods

<u>Two key points from our program position:</u>

Support alternatives to plurality voting that

- Allow the voter to express preferences more effectively
- Encourage honest rather than tactical voting
- Consider ease of implementation

Some voting methods are intended for single-winner elections, others for multi-winner elections

- Multi-winner voting methods can promote proportional representation which fosters diversity of our elected officials.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF BOULDER COUNTY

LWVBC Outreach

LWVBC has reached out to both Boulder and Broomfield* since 2017 to provide expertise on

- the Instant-Runoff Voting (IRV) form of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)
- proportional representation for city council elections

We worked with the sponsor of House Bill 21-1071 which requires county clerks to conduct IRV elections if a municipality so requests (Sec. 1-7-116 of the Colorado Revised Statutes)

We published our “What Is RCV Anyway?”* article

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LWVBC – with community participation

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2023 Election Changes You Should Know

Presented in collaboration with the League of Women Voters of Boulder County

Elesha Johnson, CRA

City Clerk / Elections Official

September 19, 2023

Even-Year Elections:

- Starting in 2026, the City of Boulder will transition to even-year elections for **ALL** municipal candidate races. Approved by the electors at the 2022 election.

- In order to transition to even-year elections, in the 2023 election, the term length for **both the Mayor and City Council members elected will be 3 years**.

- Mayor term will be 2 years after 2026 and candidates elected in 2025 will be for 3-year terms.

Even Year Conversion - Term Cycle:

3 yr terms		3 yr terms	Even year elections sync - **Terms return to "normal"**				
2023	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**
X			X				X
X			X				X
X			X				X
X			XM	M			XM
X M	M	M	X		XM	M	X
		X			X		Term ends 2032
		X			X		Term ends 2032
		X			X		Term ends 2032
		X			X		Term ends 2032
					X = election		
					M = mayor term		

Ranked Choice Voting (Instant Runoff):

- In the 2023 November election, the City of Boulder will conduct Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for the first time to elect its Mayor.
- Council candidates ***will not*** be elected by RCV.
- Ranked Choice Voting is used when there are **3 or more candidates**.
- Candidates may only run for Mayor or for Council, ***not both***.

2023 Certified Candidates

(Name and order they will appear on the ballot)

- **4** Mayoral candidates:
  - ✓ Aaron Brockett
  - ✓ Nicole Speer
  - ✓ Bob Yates
  - ✓ Paul Tweedlie

- **10** Council candidates:
  - ✓ Terri Brncic
  - ✓ Jenny Robins
  - ✓ Aaron Gabriel Neyer
  - ✓ Jacques Decalo
  - ✓ Silas Atkins
  - ✓ Waylon Lewis
  - ✓ Ryan Schuchard
  - ✓ Tara Winer
  - ✓ Tina Marquis
  - ✓ Taishya Adams

Sec. 5. - Terms of office-election-recall.

. . .

A person may be a candidate for only one office at any election. A council member whose term is not ending the November of the election may run for mayor without resigning their council seat. ***Such council member shall not be required to resign as a council member unless they win the election to the office of mayor. If a council member whose term is not ending the November of the election wins election to the office of mayor, then the council candidate receiving the fifth highest number of votes in that same election shall complete that council member's term.***

2022 Charter Amendment

Ordinance 8540 - Submitted to the voters and approved at the November 8, 2022 election, amending Sec. 5 of the Charter (*this language was added*).

Connect With Us

City Clerk's Office
Cityclerksoffice@bouldercolorado.gov
303.441.4222

Elesha Johnson, CRA
City Clerk / Records Manager
johne2@bouldercolorado.gov

John Morse, MPPA
Election Administrator
morsej@bouldercolorado.gov

Questions?

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Ranked Choice Voting (Instant Runoff) with Q&A

LWVBC – with community participation

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Impacts of the city election changes

BOULDER COUNTY ELECTIONS

CONNECT ENGAGE VOTE

Boulder County

November 2023 Election &

Ranked choice voting

(Instant runoff voting)

Boulder County Elections Division

September 2023

Overview

BOULDER COUNTY ELECTIONS

- ✓ Boulder County Elections & Voters
- ✓ Ranked Choice Voting (*instant runoff*) Overview
- ✓ How to mark your ballot
- ✓ How votes are counted
- ✓ Results reporting
- ✓ Post-election audit
- ✓ Learn more
- ✓ Q&A

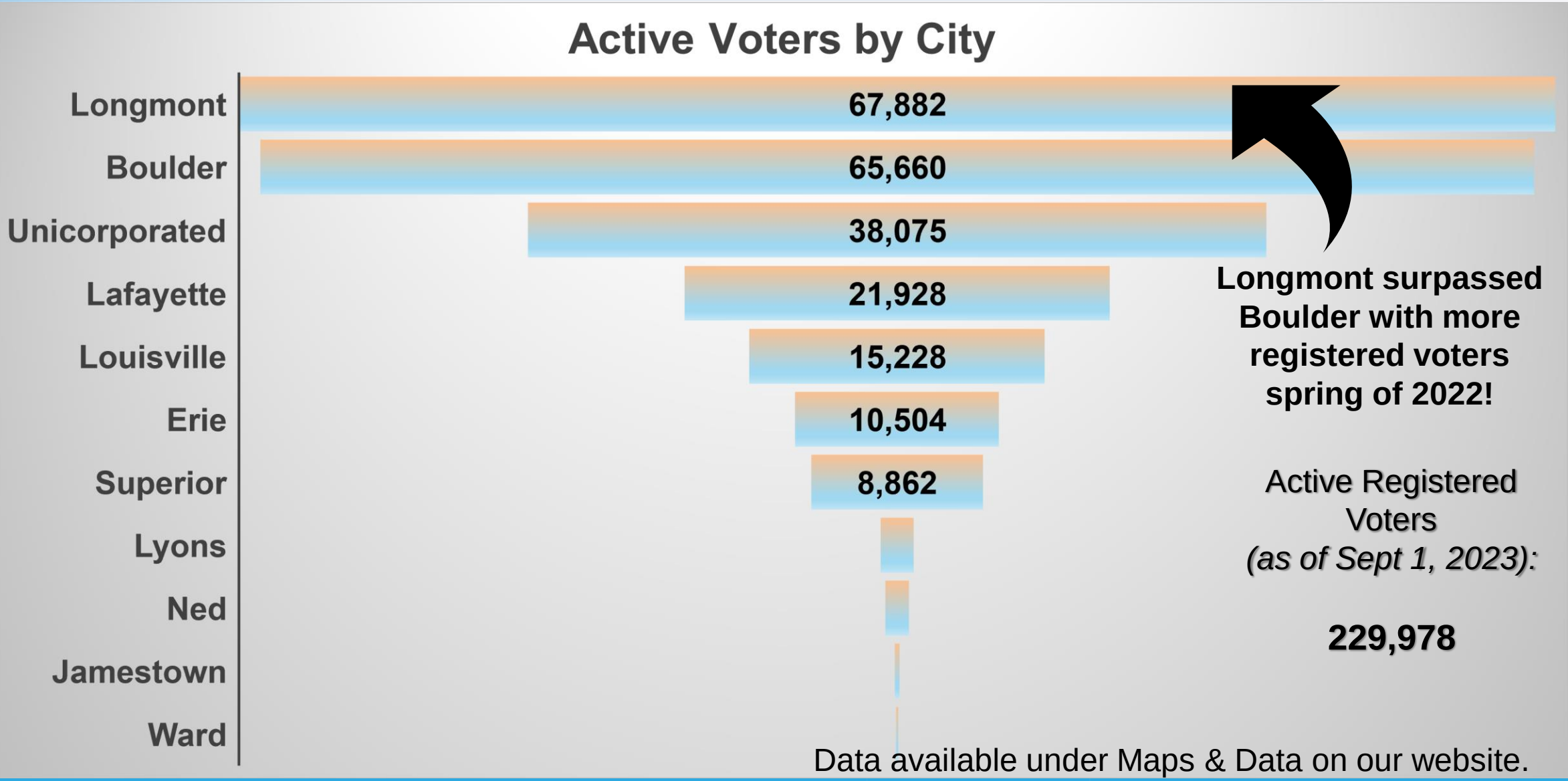
Boulder County Elections

- **Boulder County Elections** is guided by state Election Statute and Rules
- **Key dates for Boulder County Elections**

2023 Coordinated Election:	**November 7**
Military & Overseas ballots sent	Sept 23
Pre-election testing of ballots & equipment	Oct 10-13*
Ballots mailed	Oct 16
Vote Early Day	Oct 26
Vote Centers open	Oct 30
2024 Presidential Primary:	**March 5**
2024 Statewide Primary:	**June 25**
2024 General Election:	**November 5**

About Boulder County Voters

BOULDER COUNTY ELECTIONS



Longmont surpassed Boulder with more registered voters spring of 2022!

Active Registered Voters
(as of Sept 1, 2023):

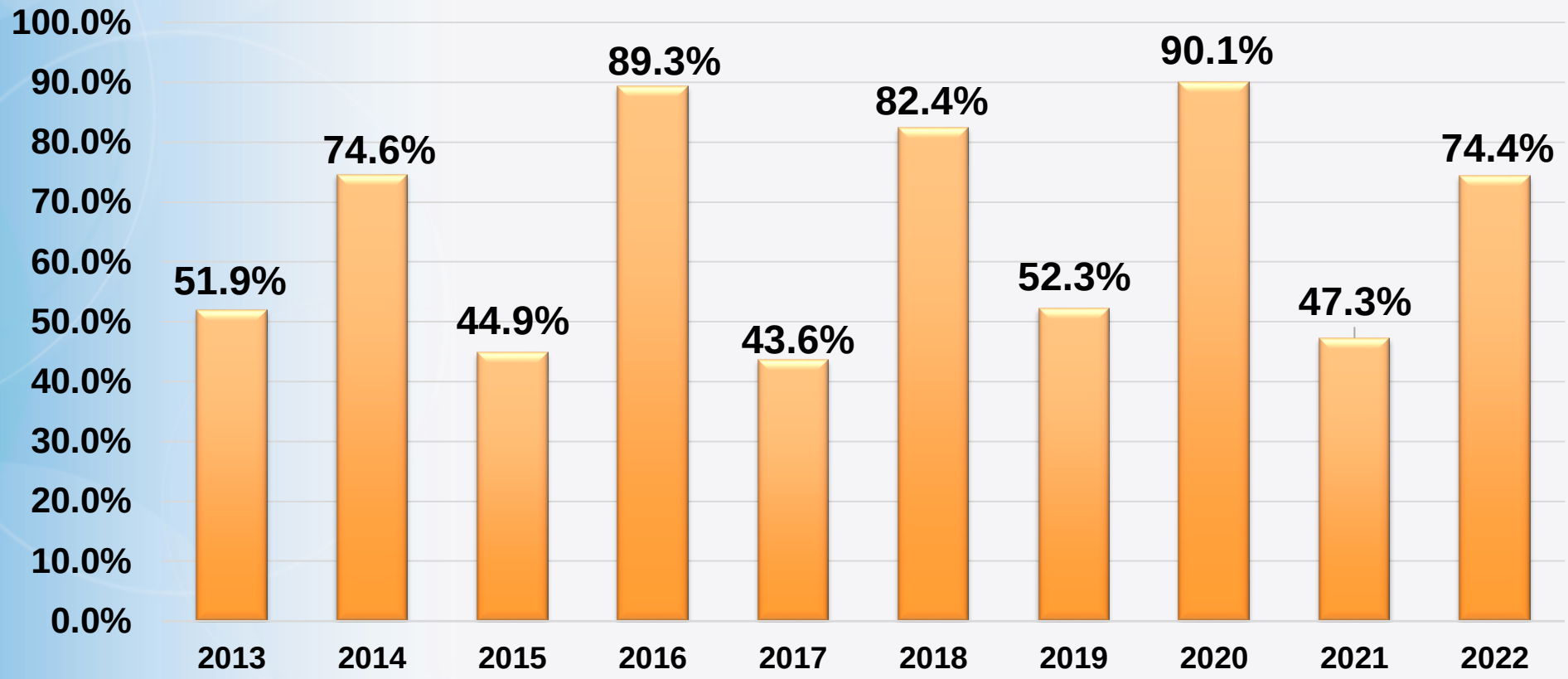
229,978

Data available under Maps & Data on our website.

About Boulder County Voters

BOULDER COUNTY ELECTIONS

Voter turnout – General & Coordinated Elections



Highest in Presidential & Mid-term Elections.

Ranked Choice Voting Overview

BOULDER COUNTY ELECTIONS

- Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for the City of Boulder's **mayoral election** was successfully passed as a **ballot measure in 2020**.
  - RCV allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference when there are three or more candidates for a contest.
  - With a **single winner**, Boulder's mayoral contest is an **instant runoff voting** type of RCV.
- In 2021 our office worked to pass a bill requiring Secretary of State to adopt rules and guidelines for the conduct of RCV elections.
- In 2023 we worked to refine RCV Election Rules through amendment review and comment.

Ranked Choice Voting Overview

Implementing RCV impacts most every facet of our election process, including:

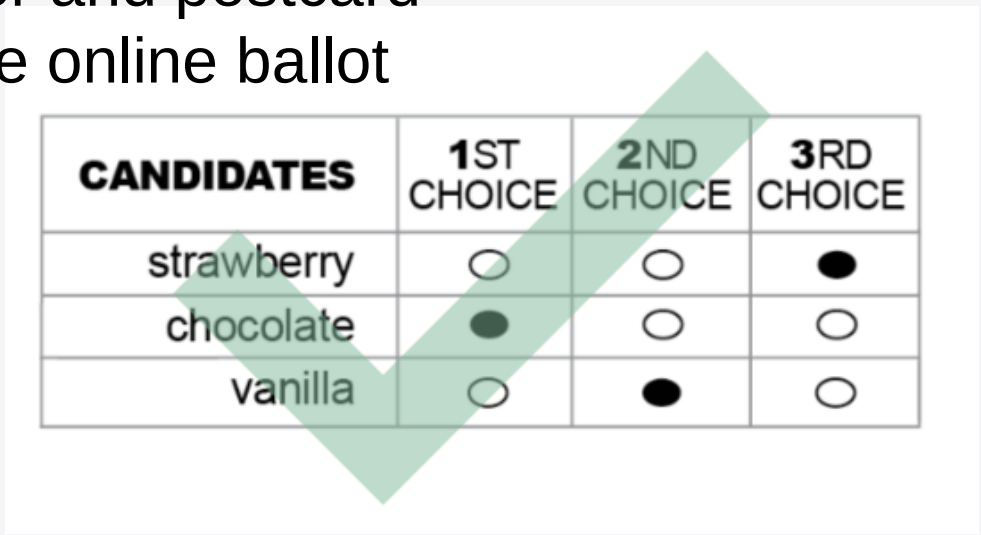
- Voter communications, education and outreach
- Ballot design, print and processing
- Voting system upgrade
- Public testing of ballots and equipment
- Results reporting
- Post-election results audit

Ranked Choice Voting Overview

BOULDER COUNTY ELECTIONS

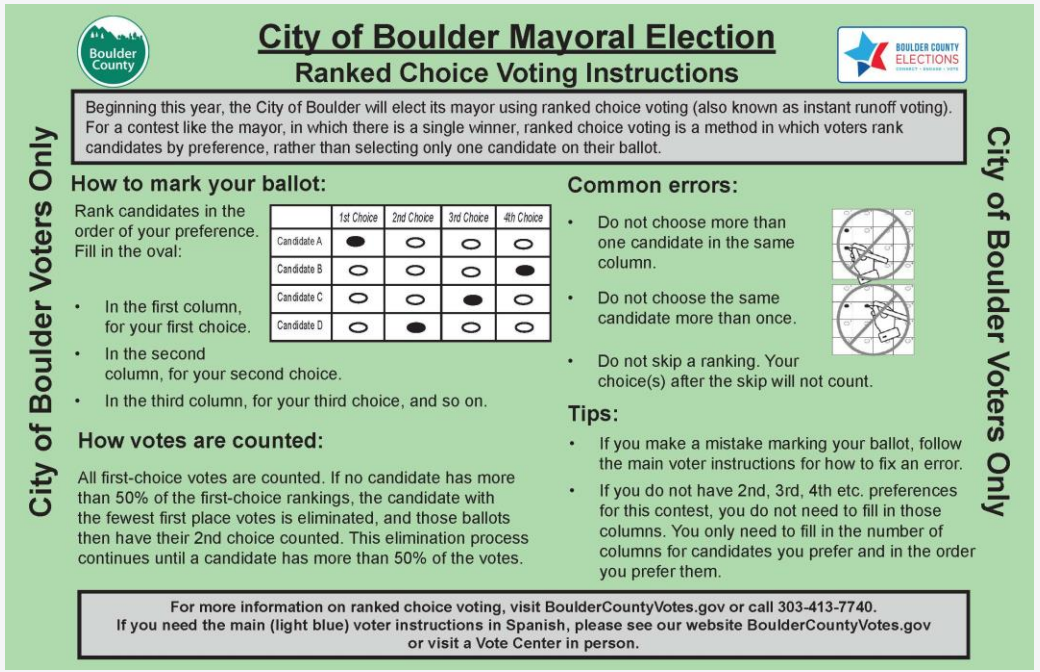
Focused, coordinated RCV voter communications / education

- Collaboration - City of Boulder and Boulder County election offices, to coordinate approach, messaging, timeline and more
- Best practices research - including consultations with Center for Civic Design and other organizations with RCV election experiences
- Channel variety – including websites, newsletter and postcard mailings, social media, emails, video, interactive online ballot
- Community events and presentations
- Separate Ballot insert with RCV information



RCV – How to Mark your Ballot

- The RCV (instant runoff) mayoral contest will appear on **all City of Boulder ballots** with other municipal contests (e.g. City Council) and measures
- City of Boulder ballot packets will include an **RCV insert** with ballot marking instructions and other information
- The ballot itself will also include ballot marking instructions for the RCV mayoral contest



City of Boulder Voters Only

City of Boulder Mayoral Election

Ranked Choice Voting Instructions

Beginning this year, the City of Boulder will elect its mayor using ranked choice voting (also known as instant runoff voting). For a contest like the mayor, in which there is a single winner, ranked choice voting is a method in which voters rank candidates by preference, rather than selecting only one candidate on their ballot.

How to mark your ballot:

Rank candidates in the order of your preference. Fill in the oval:

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
Candidate A	●	○	○	○
Candidate B	○	○	○	●
Candidate C	○	○	●	○
Candidate D	○	●	○	○

- In the first column, for your first choice.
- In the second column, for your second choice.
- In the third column, for your third choice, and so on.

How votes are counted:

All first-choice votes are counted. If no candidate has more than 50% of the first-choice rankings, the candidate with the fewest first place votes is eliminated, and those ballots then have their 2nd choice counted. This elimination process continues until a candidate has more than 50% of the votes.

Common errors:

- Do not choose more than one candidate in the same column.
- Do not choose the same candidate more than once.
- Do not skip a ranking. Your choice(s) after the skip will not count.

Tips:

- If you make a mistake marking your ballot, follow the main voter instructions for how to fix an error.
- If you do not have 2nd, 3rd, 4th etc. preferences for this contest, you do not need to fill in those columns. You only need to fill in the number of columns for candidates you prefer and in the order you prefer them.

For more information on ranked choice voting, visit BoulderCountyVotes.gov or call 303-413-7740.
If you need the main (light blue) voter instructions in Spanish, please see our website BoulderCountyVotes.gov or visit a Vote Center in person.

City of Boulder Voters Only

RCV – How to Mark your Ballot

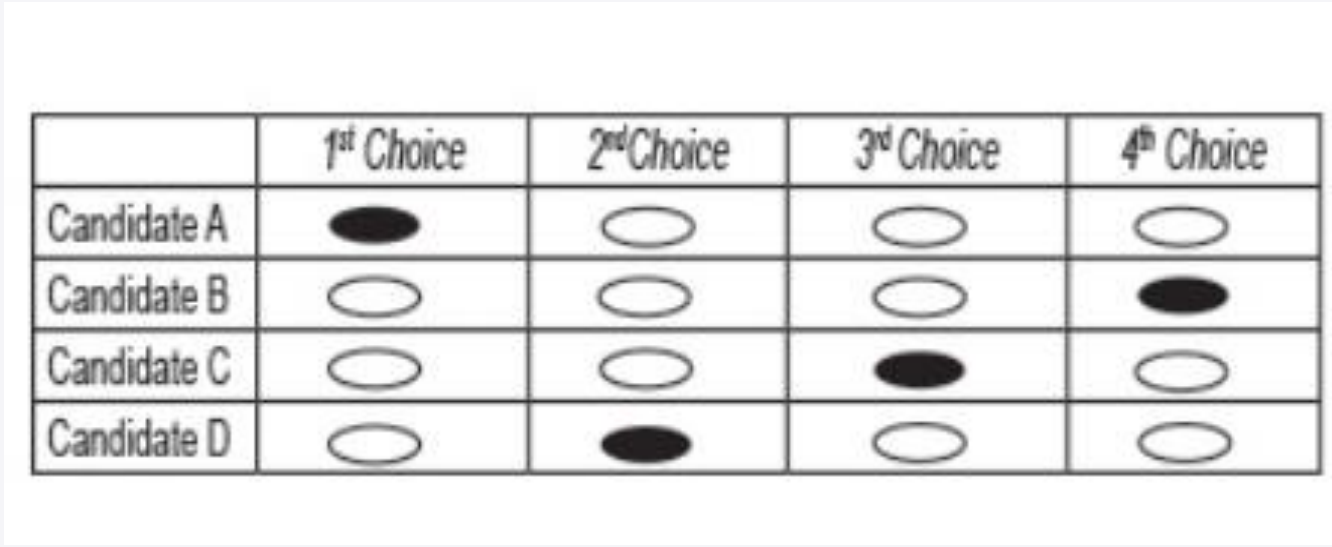
BOULDER COUNTY ELECTIONS

- Rank candidates in the order of your preference by filling in the oval as follows:

  In the first column, for your first choice.

  In the second column, for your second choice.

  In the third column, for your third choice, and so on



	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
Candidate A	●	○	○	○
Candidate B	○	○	○	●
Candidate C	○	○	●	○
Candidate D	○	●	○	○

- You can continue to rank candidates until you run out of allowable rankings or do not wish to rank any remaining candidates.

RCV – How to Mark your Ballot

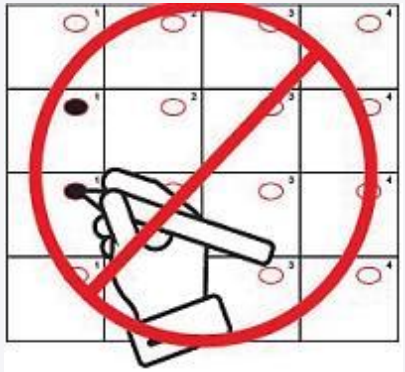
BOULDER COUNTY ELECTIONS

- As with plurality contests, in addition to ambiguous markings, there are **RCV ballot marking exceptions,** including:

  Skipped ranking: For example, marking 1st and 3rd choices, no second choice; choices after the skip are ignored

  Overvote (*multiple votes in a column*): Invalidates the overvoted rankings and all lower rankings marked for that contest.

  Duplicate ranking *(multiple votes in a row)*: Candidate is credited with the highest ranking marked; other rankings for that candidate are ignored.



- The City of Boulder has posted an online RCV practice voting tool that illustrates these exceptions. See information on: ***Ranked Choice Voting Guide | City of Boulder (bouldercolorado.gov)***

RCV – How Votes are Counted

BOULDER COUNTY ELECTIONS

- Colorado Election Statute and Rule governs how we count votes, including a *Voter Intent Guide* for our bi-partisan teams that adjudicate ballot marking exceptions.
- In the first round of tabulation, first-choice rankings are counted for each candidate and if no candidate has more than 50% of the first-choice rankings:
  - The candidate with the fewest first-choice rankings is eliminated, and
  - Those ballots then have their 2nd choice counted
- This elimination and transfer process continues until a candidate has more than 50% of the votes counted.

RCV – Results Reporting

Boulder County's election night reporting website will include Boulder's RCV mayoral contest results

Example

View Results | Voter Turnout By Precinct | Statewide Contests and Other Counties | Share

Election Summary	
* Total Registration (Active + Inactive voters)	000,000
* Active Registered Voters	000,000
* Property Owner Only Ballots Distributed	000
Total Ballots Counted:	00,000

* Voter Registration Figures as of 7 a.m. on Nov 8

RESULTS - ALL CONTESTS

City of Boulder - Mayor

Ranked-choice voting contest results, click on this link:

RCV Contest

City of Boulder Council Candidates

RCV – Results Reporting

RCV mayoral contest results will be available in a pdf report and in a visualization / graphical format

Examples

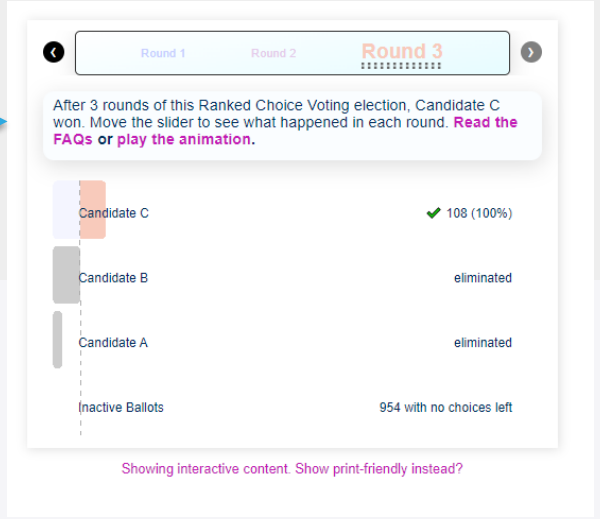
City of Boulder - Mayor

This is a ranked-choice voting contest. A candidate must receive more than 50% of the first choice ranks to be elected. Click on the links below to see the contest results.

Download ranked-choice voting results report

Ranked-Choice Voting Visualization

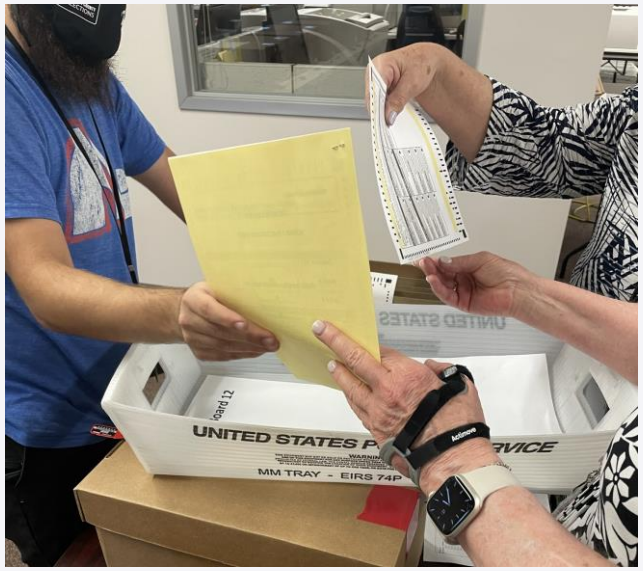
Learn more about how RCV works.



RCV Post-election audit

- **Colorado Election Rule:** 'The designated election official must '**audit each ranked voting race** before the canvass board certifies official election results…'
  - The CO Secretary of State's Office's current Risk Limiting Audit (RLA) toolset **does not** accommodate RCV contest auditing.

- **Our approach** to preparing for our RCV contest post-election audit:
  - Consultations with election officials and other organizations who've conducted RCV contest elections and participated in a post-election audit process.
  - Research of RCV auditing practices and tools, and consultations with toolset developers.
  - Incorporate current RLA features, e.g. Audit Board participation, risk limit, random seed and ballot selection, use of Ballot Manifest and voting system Cast Vote Record (CVR), comparison of physical ballot to CVR



RCV Post-election audit

- **In-progress:**
  - Evaluation and testing of the open-source RCV RLA toolset.
  - Defining corresponding RCV audit processes and procedures, including integration with current RLA procedures.
  - Continued consultations with the toolset developers, other election offices and Secretary of State's Office regarding our planned audit procedures.

Our post election audit is currently scheduled to occur the week of November 20.

Want to learn more?

- **BoulderCountyVotes.gov** – See the Ranked Choice Voting page
- Boulder County Elections public testing of ballots & equipment (Logic & Accuracy Test)
- Boulder County Elections Ballot Processing public tours
- Additional Election Information webinars that will include similar information on Ranked Choice Voting (for your friends and neighbors who missed tonight!)

Thank you & Key Plugs!

BOULDER COUNTY ELECTIONS

- ✓ **Update or check your registration**: www.GoVoteColorado.gov
  - ✓ Make sure to include/add your email address
- ✓ **Talk to YOUR friends and neighbors** about how to properly mark their ballots and remind them to refer to the GREEN RCV instructional ballot insert.

Follow us:

- ✓ Twitter: @BoCoClerk
- ✓ Instagram: @BoulderCountyElections
- ✓ Facebook: @BoulderCountyClerk
- ✓ YouTube: @BoulderCountyClerk

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Tabulate sample Instant-Runoff Voting (IRV) election

Impacts of the city election changes

Let's hold a practice IRV election!

IRV = Instant-Runoff Voting = the form of RCV that will be used in the mayoral contest
Note: This exercise is not being certified by any official election administrators.

Mark the practice IRV ballot contest:

Rank up to 4 candidates.

Turn in ("cast") your ballot.

Volunteer election counters and observers

Reporting IRV Results

	Votes	Percentage of Total Votes Cast
Cycling		
Running		
Skiing		
Hiking		
Invalid		
Inactive/Exhausted		
Totals		

Observations of Our Practice Election

Voting

How is ranking different from voting for multiple candidates?

How many candidates did you rank? How did you decide the order?

Tabulating

How many rounds of tabulation?

Possible journeys for a ballot in our practice tabulation

Reporting Round-by-Round

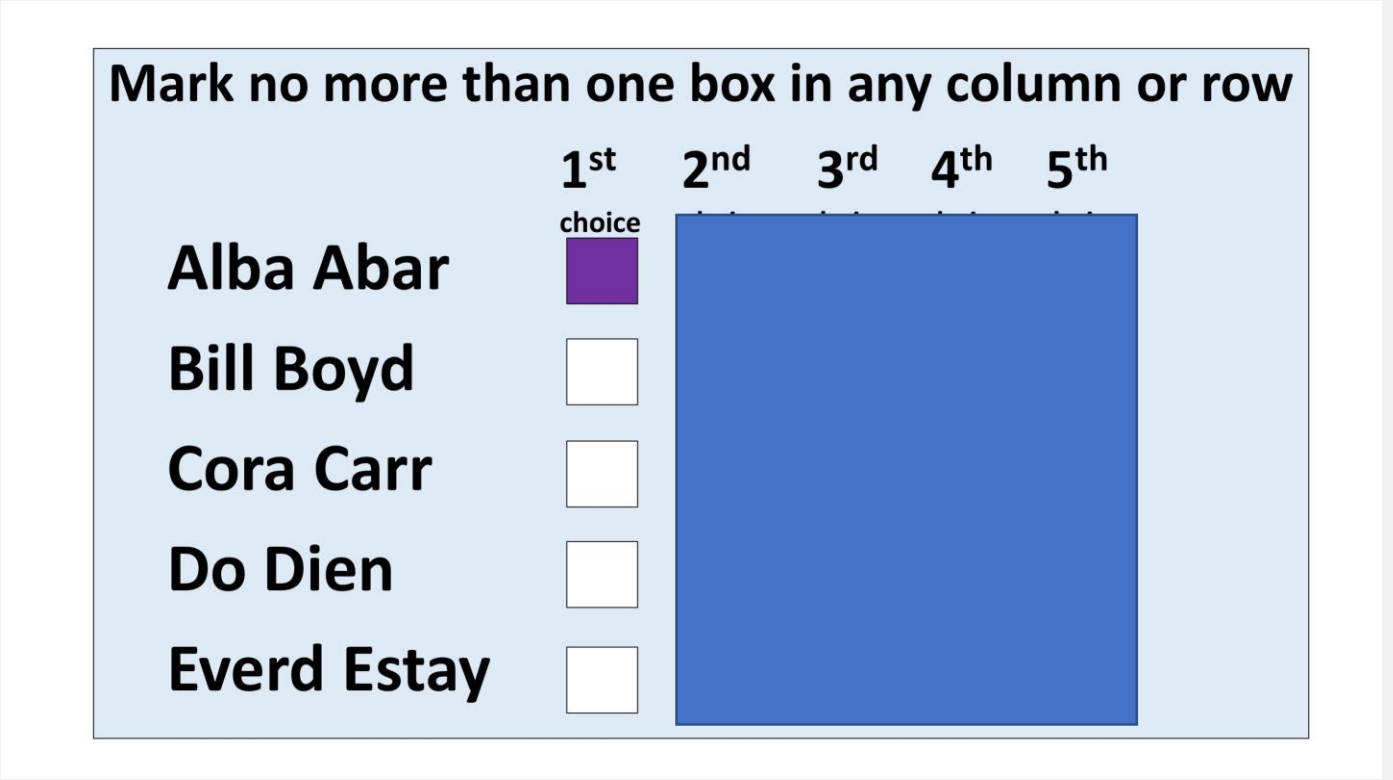
How do multiple tabulation rounds affect reporting of results?

Considerations when Ranking Candidates in IRV

Your #1 ranking is the only ranking that is guaranteed to be counted. Ranking ≠ Voting.

IRV Tabulation – Round 1

For Instant-Runoff Voting tabulation, count 1st choices as votes.
A candidate with more than half the votes wins so subsequent rounds are unnecessary – same result as our traditional Plurality Voting.



Considerations when Ranking Candidates in IRV

Your #1 ranking is the only ranking that is guaranteed to be counted. Ranking ≠ Voting.

If there are 4 candidates and 4 possible rankings, your 4^{th} ranking will never be counted.

Rank as many candidates as you feel comfortable ranking to give you a chance to have more say in the outcome!

Unique Interplay of Boulder's Council and Mayoral Contests

How might you vote differently in the mayoral contest when you know that

- Boulder has a "weak" mayor who serves for 2 years?
- if a continuing council member loses the mayoral election, that person *remains on council for 2 years?*
- if a continuing council member is elected, then *5 council candidates (a majority) will be elected*, but you are limited to voting for 4 council candidates?

Are other cities in Colorado using Ranked Choice Voting?

The Instant-Runoff Voting (IRV) form of ranked choice voting has been successfully used in 1-winner contests for about 2 decades in U.S. jurisdictions outside of Colorado. The **City of Boulder** ~~and **Broomfield**~~ will be the first jurisdiction in Colorado to hold an IRV election since **Telluride** in 2019 and **Basalt** in 2020. Those small jurisdictions used IRV with hand-counted ballots.

The City of Boulder used proportional RCV (pRCV) in 3-winner council contests from 1917 to 1947! Other cities using pRCV are Cambridge, MA; Albany, CA; and soon Portland, OR.

LWVBC Program Positions* on Other City of Boulder Issues

- Signature requirements for recalls and citizen initiatives (in future years)
- Proportional representation on council
- Reporting council election results

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF BOULDER COUNTY

LWV Forums for City of Boulder

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Candidate and ballot measure info: **vote411.org**						Oct 14 **City Council** Municipal Bldg 10-11:30am
Oct 15 **Ballot Measures** *virtual* **City**: 3-3:30pm **County/State**: 3:30-4	Oct 16 **Ballot Measures** Frasier Meadows 1:30-3pm		Oct 18 **School Board** BVSD Ed Center 6-7:30pm			Oct 21 **Mayor** Municipal Bldg 10-11:30am

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF BOULDER COUNTY

Thank you for attending!

This event's recording will be posted on the LWVBC YouTube channel:

lwvbc.org > News > LWVBC on Social Media

More questions on Boulder's Election Changes?

email **vmteam@lwvbc.org**

Voting Methods Team webpage →