

VOTE DIFFERENT SANTA FE!

frequently asked questions

When you step into the voting booth, you'll notice some changes this year. Here's what you need to know:

What is Ranked Choice Voting?

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) allows voters to rank candidates by preference instead of choosing just one.

Why change the system, and why change it now?

In the 2008 election, Santa Feans voted to put RCV into the City Charter. The voting software to support RCV wasn't available then, but was installed recently.

How do I fill out a Ranked Choice ballot?

Ranked Choice Voting is easy! Instead of choosing just one candidate, you can rank them all, from your first choice to your last.

Find the name of your first choice and completely fill in the oval next to their name in the "1st Choice" column. Then find the name of your second choice, and fill in the oval next to their name in the "2nd Choice" column. Continue until you have ranked all the candidates you choose to rank.

What if I don't want to rank all the candidates?

We encourage voters to rank the full range of candidates. If you choose not to do that, your ballot may not be counted in later rounds if your top candidates are eliminated and the lower positions are left blank. These are called "exhausted ballots."

Does my vote get counted if I rank my favorite choice in every position?

Your vote will count only once for that candidate, so it doesn't help your candidate's chances of winning. If voting goes to later rounds, your ballot won't count once your vote is repeated.

Can I give different candidates the same ranking?

No. When the ballot counter reads multiple candidates ranked the same, it will discard the ballot.

What happens if I make a mistake with my ballot?

Mistakes happen, so if you make one, don't be shy! Tell a poll worker and they will help you get a new ballot printed. The vote-reading machine will also recognize some of the most common errors and give you the option to "spoil" that ballot and get a new one, or cast your ballot as-is if you choose to.

How are ranked choice ballots counted?

To win a ranked choice election, a candidate must receive at least a majority of total votes counted. A majority is 50% of the total, plus one vote.

After all the votes are in on Election Day, counters will tally first-choice votes. If no candidate wins a majority based on first-choice votes, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated, and the second choices on that candidate's ballots are awarded those votes.

Votes are re-calculated, and if one candidate gets a majority, they are declared the winner. If not, we repeat the process. The candidate in last place is eliminated, and the second choice on those ballots is awarded those votes. If the second choice on those ballots has already been eliminated, the third choice is counted, and so on.

The process is repeated until one candidate reaches a majority and is declared the winner.

Ranked Choice Voting is easy, but change can be hard – if you have questions, we're here to get you answers! Elections are the heart of our democracy. Thank you for participating in this process as we all work to make this election a success!



VoteDifferentSantaFe.com



Follow us on at @SantaFeGov for videos, resources, and sample ballots!

Talk to a real-live person to get your questions answered: (505) 955-6949.

