

## **NEW YORK CITY VOTERS EMBRACE RANKED CHOICE VOTING (RCV)**

*Preliminary results from largest Ranked Choice Voting exit poll and election in US history*

Over 1.1 million New Yorkers made history voting in the largest and most diverse ranked choice voting election in the United States. **After three years of ongoing efforts, the city held the largest ranked choice voting election in US history in time for the most consequential local election cycle since 9/11.**

Common Cause New York and Rank the Vote NYC contracted with Edison Research to conduct exit polling during the city's first citywide Ranked Choice Voting election. The survey was conducted from June 12 – June 22, 2021 among a representative sample of 1,662 Democratic in-person voters in New York City.<sup>1</sup> Full results will be available in mid-July, which will include results from absentee and Republican voters, however early data clearly demonstrates:

- **New Yorkers embraced Ranked Choice Voting at the ballot box.**
  - 83% of voters ranked at least two candidates on their ballots in the mayoral primary. The majority of those who opted not to rank did so because they only had one preferred candidate.
  - 42% of voters maximized their newfound power and ranked five candidates.
- **New Yorkers understand the promise and the power of Ranked Choice Voting.<sup>2</sup>**
  - 51% ranked because it allowed it them to vote their values
  - 49% ranked because it allowed them to support multiple candidates
  - 41% ranked because it gave them more of a say in who gets elected
- **New Yorkers found Ranked Choice Voting easy to use.**
  - 95% of voters found their ballot simple to complete.
  - 78% of New Yorkers said they understood Ranked Choice Voting extremely or very well.
- **New Yorkers want Ranked Choice Voting in future elections.**
  - 77% of New Yorkers want Ranked Choice Voting in future local elections.

With over 1.1 million New Yorkers voting across the five boroughs, the highest turnout for a municipal primary in thirty plus years, Ranked Choice Voting has delivered on its promise for New York City: our elected representation reflects the will of the majority of voters, not the minority, and puts power back in the hands of voters during local elections.

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews were conducted via multiple modes including by telephone and in-person exit polling at 17 early voting locations and at 30 election day voting locations. Interviews were offered in both English and Spanish. 70% of the sample were polled on election day and 30% were polled before the election during the early voting period. Absentee exit polling is ongoing and will be included in the final results in mid-July.

<sup>2</sup> Multiple responses allowed

**THE MAJORITY OF VOTERS RANKED THEIR BALLOTS**  
**VOTER BEHAVIOR IN THE DEMOCRATIC MAYORAL PRIMARY**

- Overall, 83% of voters ranked at least two candidates in the mayoral primary.
- In fact, contrary to fears that Ranked Choice Voting would harm voters by creating a knowledge tax, **most voters ranked three or more candidates in the mayoral primary.**
  - Overall, 72% of voters ranked three or more candidates.
  - 66% of Black voters ranked three or more candidates, 64% of Hispanic voters ranked three or more candidates, 80% of white voters ranked three or more candidates and 72% of Asian voters ranked three or more candidates.
- **While the majority of voters ranked their ballot, there is a strong voter preference to maximize their choices by utilizing all their available rankings in the mayoral primary.**
  - Overall, 42% utilized all five rankings on their ballot.
  - 43% of Black voters ranked five candidates, 40% of Hispanic voters ranked five candidates, 45% of white voters ranked five candidates, and 33% of Asian voters ranked five candidates.

*Mayoral primary: Ballot utilization by voter type*

	<i>All voters</i>	<i>Black voters</i>	<i>Hispanic voters</i>	<i>White voters</i>	<i>Asian voters</i>
<i>Ranked 1 candidate</i>	17%	25%	20%	10%	13%
<i>Ranked 2 candidates</i>	11%	9%	16%	10%	15%
<i>Ranked 3 candidates</i>	18%	16%	14%	20%	24%
<i>Ranked 4 candidates</i>	12%	7%	11%	16%	15%
<i>Ranked 5 candidates</i>	42%	43%	40%	45%	33%

- Overall, the majority of voters who did not rank did so because they only had one preferred candidate in the mayoral primary.<sup>3</sup>
  - 65% of voters did not rank because they only had one preferred candidate.
  - 28% reported they did not rank because they didn't know enough about other candidates.

<sup>3</sup> Multiple responses allowed.

## **VOTERS UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THE VALUE PROPOSITION OF RANKED CHOICE VOTING<sup>4</sup>**

- Overall, 51% of voters ranked in the mayoral primary because it allowed them to vote their values and 49% ranked in the mayoral primary because it allowed them to support multiple candidates.
- Black, Hispanic and Asian voters were most likely to say they ranked in the mayoral primary because it allowed them to vote their values.
- White voters were most likely to say they ranked in the mayoral primary because it allowed them to support multiple candidates.

*Why Voters Ranked in the Mayoral Primary*

<i>Why did you rank?</i>	<i>All voters</i>	<i>Black voters</i>	<i>Hispanic voters</i>	<i>White voters</i>	<i>Asian voters</i>
<i>Vote my values</i>	51%	54%	56%	49%	57%
<i>Support multiple candidates</i>	49%	40%	42%	59%	52%
<i>More of a say in who gets elected</i>	41%	34%	30%	50%	42%
<i>My voice will be better heard by elected officials</i>	29%	27%	25%	31%	33%
<i>I'll feel better about the outcome, regardless of who wins</i>	24%	24%	23%	24%	27%

## **NEW YORKERS UNDERSTAND AND FIND RANKED CHOICE VOTING SIMPLE**

### **NEW YORKERS UNDERSTAND RANKED CHOICE VOTING**

- **Overall, 78% of New Yorkers said they understood Ranked Choice Voting extremely or very well.**
  - 46% of voters said they understood Ranked Choice Voting extremely well and 33% of voters said they understood Ranked Choice Voting very well.
- **Regardless of age, voters understood Ranked Choice Voting.**
  - 46% of 18-39 year olds said they understood Ranked Choice Voting extremely well and 34% said they understood Ranked Choice Voting very well.
  - 44% of 40-59 year olds said they understood Ranked Choice Voting extremely well and 34% said they understood Ranked Choice Voting very well.

<sup>4</sup> Multiple responses allowed

- 47% of 60+ voters said they understood Ranked Choice Voting extremely well and 31% said they understood Ranked Choice Voting very well.
- **There was nominal overall variability between ethnic groups.**
  - **Overall, 77% of Black voters said they understood Ranked Choice Voting.** 47% of Black voters said they understood Ranked Choice Voting extremely well and 29% said they understood Ranked Choice Voting very well.
  - **Overall, 80% of Hispanic voters said they understood Ranked Choice Voting.** 41% of Hispanic voters said they understood Ranked Choice Voting extremely well and 38% said they understood Ranked Choice Voting very well.
  - **Overall, 77% of Asian voters said they understood Ranked Choice Voting.** 39% of Asian voters said they understood Ranked Choice Voting extremely well and 38% said they understood Ranked Choice Voting very well.
  - **Overall, 81% of white voters said they understood Ranked Choice Voting.** 48% of Hispanic voters said they understood Ranked Choice Voting extremely well and 33% said they understood Ranked Choice Voting very well.

#### **NEW YORKERS FOUND THEIR RANKED CHOICE VOTING BALLOT SIMPLE TO COMPLETE**

- **Across the city, a whopping 95% of voters found their ballot simple to complete.**
  - 75% of voters found the ballot “very simple” to complete and 20% of voters found the ballot “somewhat simple” to complete.
- **Regardless of age, voters understood their new ballot.**
  - 97% of 18-39 year olds found their ballot simple to complete. 78% found the ballot “very simple” to complete and 19% found the ballot “somewhat simple” to complete.
  - 94% of 40-59 year olds found their ballot simple to complete. 76% found the ballot “very simple” to complete and 18% found the ballot “somewhat simple” to complete.
  - 94% of 60+ voters found their ballot simple to complete. 71% found the ballot “very simple” to complete and 23% found the ballot “somewhat simple” to complete.
- **There was nominal overall variability between ethnic groups.**
  - 93% of Black voters found their ballot simple to complete. 72% found the ballot “very simple” to complete and 22% found the ballot “somewhat simple” to

complete.

- 95% of Hispanic voters found their ballot simple to complete. 75% found the ballot “very simple” to complete and 20% found the ballot “somewhat simple” to complete.
- 97% of Asian voters found their ballot simple to complete. 80% found the ballot “very simple” to complete and 17% found the ballot “somewhat simple” to complete.
- 95% of white voters found their ballot simple to complete. 76% found the ballot “very simple” to complete and 19% found the ballot “somewhat simple” to complete.

## **NEW YORKERS WANT RANKED CHOICE VOTING FOR FUTURE LOCAL ELECTIONS**

- **77% of voters think Ranked Choice Voting should be used in our local elections.**

*Percentage of Voters Who Support RCV in Local Elections*

<b>Gender</b>	
Male	76%
Female	78%
<b>Age</b>	
18-39	86%
40-59	74%
60+	72%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White	78%
Black	75%
Hispanic	79%
Asian	82%
<b>Borough</b>	
Bronx	72%

Brooklyn	77%
Manhattan	85%
Queens	71%
Staten Island	68%

## **VOTER OUTREACH & EDUCATION EFFORTS ARE WORKING**

- **Voters are receiving RCV-related information and education from a variety of sources.**
  - Television was the top source of RCV-related information and education for voters during the June primary.

### *Top 5 RCV Educational Resources for Voters during the June Primary*

	All voters
#1	TV (53%)
#2	Mailed brochure (39%)
#3	Newspaper (27%)
#4	Social media (23%)
#5	Radio (20%)

## **Appendix A: Edison Research Exit Poll Methodology**

The survey was designed to measure the attitudes and experiences of New York City voters in the first citywide experience using Ranked Choice Voting for the NYC Mayoral Primary.

The survey was conducted June 12 – June 22, 2021 among a representative sample of 1,662 Democratic voters in New York City. Interviews were conducted via multiple modes including by telephone and in-person exit polling at 17 early voting locations and at 30 election day voting locations. Interviews were offered in both English and Spanish. 70% of the sample were polled on election day and 30% were polled before the election during the early voting period.

Absentee exit polling is ongoing and will be included in the final results in mid-July.

The in-person early and election day polling locations were randomly selected using a cluster sample design and are a probability sample of voting precincts. Within each polling location an interviewer approached every voter as they exited. The exact number of questionnaires depends on voter turnout and voter cooperation.

The data was weighted by sex, age and race, using the observed characteristics of those who refused to participate or who were missed, combined with the demographics of the known respondents who completed the questionnaire. The data was also weighted by education and to match the first-round results from the mayoral Democratic primary election.

## **Appendix B: Sample Data and Crosstabs**

[Complete crosstabs can be found here.](#)

### *Demographics of Preliminary Sample for June Exit Polling*

<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>1,662</b>
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	43%
Female	56%
<b>Age</b>	
18-39	28%
40-59	32%

60+	38%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White	44%
Black	31%
Hispanic	17%
Asian	9%
Other	6%
<b>Borough</b>	
Bronx	11%
Brooklyn	40%
Manhattan	28%
Queens	29%
Staten Island	4%