FAIRVOTE MINNESOTA

Ranked Choice Voting
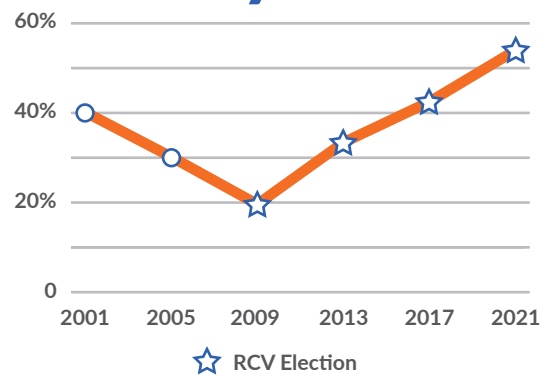# By the Numbers

*2021 Key Election Findings: **Minneapolis***

2021 Voter Turnout

54%

*Voter turnout increased by **27%** over the 2017 election.*

Highest voter turnout in
45 years

☆ RCV Election

99.96% Valid Ballot Rate:

88
Percent of voters found Ranked Choice Voting **easy to use**

73
Percent of voters **ranked their ballots**

76
Percent of voters **like and want to continue using RCV**

54% of City Council Members are **women**, and **62%** are **people of color**.

KEY FINDINGS

Turnout in Minneapolis was **145,337 (54%)**—*the highest for a municipal election in over 45 years and a more than 27% increase over the turnout in 2017.* Since Minneapolis began using RCV in 2009, the city has experienced a steady and significant increase in voter turnout.

Overall, ten out of the 25 municipal races went to a runoff, or reallocation: The mayoral race; city council races in Wards 1, 2, 3, 5, and 10; Park Board Districts 2, 6 and At-Large; and the Board of Estimate and Taxation (BOE) seats. Incumbents won two of these seats, and incumbents lost four. There were four open seats that went to runoffs: one park board seat, one council seat, and two BOE seats.

In all but one race, the candidate in the lead in the first round won in the runoff. In Park Board District Ward 6, Cathy Abene, who placed second in the first round, garnered a majority of the vote in the final round.

In competitive council races that were decided by second- and third-choice votes, we saw the highest rates of increased voter turnout, demonstrating that turnout increases when voters believe their vote matters:

Race	2017 Turnout	2021 Turnout	Percent Turnout Increase Over 2017
Ward 1 City Council	44.9%	57.4%	27.7%
Ward 2 City council	39.7%	55.8%	16.1%
Ward 5 City Council	28%	33.1%	18.3%
Ward 9 City Council	43.1%	49.5%	14.8%
Ward 10 City Council	37.8%	48.8%	29%

Minneapolis city leadership is more diverse than ever before:
- People of color represent a majority of the Minneapolis City Council for the first time in history.
- Women represent a majority of city council (7 out of 13 councilmembers), including Andrea Jenkins, a Black transgender woman who was reelected and is likely to be elected council president.
- The second Somali-American and first Latino members elected to the council were reelected, and the first Pakistani member was elected this year.
- Women represent seven of nine park board seats.

This year women and people of color ran competitively in nearly every race.
- In 86% offices up for election across the city, a woman and/or person of color either won or ran a competitive campaign.
- A woman or person of color won in 76% (19 of 25) of the seats up for election.

There was also a significant range of political diversity, from very progressive to moderate to conservative candidates in the mayoral and city council races. Voters ranked candidates as second

or third choices who may have differed from their primary political beliefs but who they found acceptable. The opportunity to express non-binary political preferences in this way and ensuring candidates built broad coalitions to win is important at a time of growing political polarization.

A whopping 88% of polled voters said they found RCV very simple, or somewhat simple to use, according to an exit poll by Edison Research.

- While younger voters ages 18–34 (93%) found RCV simple to use, 79% of voters aged 55 and older said they found it simple to use as well.
- Income and education did not impact ease of RCV use:
  - 88.5% of voters with a college education and 87.5% of voters without higher education found RCV to be simple to use.
  - 88.7% of voters with an income above $50,000 and 87.6% of voters with an income under $50,000 found RCV to be easy.
  - 83.4% of voters of color found RCV to be simple to use, underscoring—once again—that voters of color understand RCV and are adept at using it.

84% of polled voters across all age, income, education and ethnic groups said they were familiar with RCV before going to the polls. This is up from 77% in 2017 demonstrating the importance and success of the outreach and education efforts undertaken by FairVote Minnesota, the City of Minneapolis, candidates and the media to prepare voters for Election Day.

The valid ballot error rate was an impressive 99.9996%, demonstrating high levels of voter confidence and proficiency in ranking their ballots.

Voters *like* it**: 76% of all voters want to continue to use RCV in future municipal elections and 69 percent would like to see it used for state elections.**

- High levels of support for RCV in Minneapolis exists among older, nonwhite, lower income and less educated voters (people whom critics claimed wouldn't understand or like RCV), with a vast majority in all demographic groups saying they want to see RCV continue to be used in future city elections.

Voters understood and used the power of RCV: **73% ranked a second choice in the mayoral race, and 47% ranked all three of their available choices in the mayoral race.**

Voters for the second and third place finishers in the mayoral race ranked their ballots at an incredibly high rate—93% and 95% respectively. 88% of voters who chose someone other than the incumbent ranked their ballots.

- This data shows that voters are sophisticated in completing their ballot,

Race	Ranked 2	Ranked 3
Park Board At-Large	71%	56%
Ward 2 City Council	77%	45%
Ward 5 City Council	64%	44%
Ward 10 City Council	80%	71%

ranking when they believe that their favorite candidate may be eliminated in the runoff and that their second and potential third choice will matter.

- It's not surprising to see that fewer of the incumbent's voters ranked as they anticipated he would remain viable in the final round.

High rates of ranking consistently occurred across competitive, multi-candidate city council and park board races, including wards that are highly diverse and where a large percentage of residents have lower incomes.

Winning majorities: RCV requires winning candidates to build broad coalitions of voter support.

- Mayor Jacob Frey, who won with first, second and third choice support, reached the winning threshold with 56.23% of ballots in the final round (49.08% of initial ballots cast) and was present on 55.92% of all ballots. Kate Knuth was present on 47.82%, and Sheila Nezhad was on 41.33% of all ballots.

- In the council races, 8 of the 13 contests were decided in the initial round. Five went to a runoff with close outcomes in each race. In these five races, the winners were present on a majority of the voters' ballots and won with the following percentages in the final round:

  - Ward 1 – Elliott Payne – 52.53%
  - Ward 2 – Robin Wonsley Worlobah – 50.12%
  - Ward 3 – Michael Rainville – 54.97%
  - Ward 5 – Jeremiah Ellison – 51.12%
  - Ward 10 – Aisha Chughtai 59.95%

Prepared by FairVote Minnesota Foundation, December 2021

Sources:

City of Minneapolis Election Results

Edison Research in-person exit poll at randomly selected voting precincts among 1380 Minneapolis voters using a weighted design to ensure an accurate representation of election day voters. The margin of error at the 95 percent confidence level for the full Minneapolis sample of voters is +/-3.