

In 2019, voters in Easthampton approved the use of Ranked Choice Voting in city elections for **single winner races** (Mayor and District City Councilor). It was used for the first time at the Nov. 2, 2021 City Election.

The other positions on the ballot use traditional "plurality" voting without the option to rank the candidates, which means:

- Vote for **FOUR** for At-Large City Councilors
- Vote for **SIX** for School Committee members

## **But I thought Ranked Choice Voting was voted down?**

A statewide ballot question in 2020 did not pass. So, unless another attempt is made to bring it before the voters or the state legislature passes a bill implementing it for statewide offices, Ranked Choice Voting will be used only for municipal elections; it will not be used for state primaries or elections.

## **How do I mark a Ranked Choice Voting race?**

Answer....it's easy! Instead of just voting for one person, you will be able to **RANK** your choices - your 1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice, etc. **BUT**, you don't have to rank all the candidates if you don't want to. If you only want to choose one person, you would simply fill in the oval with that person as your 1st choice. Need more information? Take a look at "[How to Mark a Ranked Choice Voting Ballot](#)".

## **But how does counting work with Ranked Choice Voting races?**

Well, yes, it is more complicated -- but the goal is for a candidate to win with at least 50% - a **majority of the vote -- not just the MOST votes.**

After the polls close, the first step will be to count the votes as usual using the ImageCast vote tabulators. **If a candidate gets at least 50% of the vote - they are declared the winner.** If, however, no one gets at least 50% of the votes cast, then the ranking software will drop off the person with the lowest number of votes. The voters who ranked that person as their first choice, will have their second choice counted instead (if they ranked more than one). The software will then again run the tabulations to see if someone now has at least 50%. This will continue until someone receives at least 50% of the vote. Still confused? Watch "[Instant Runoff Voting Explained](#)"

## **What if I want to write-in a name? Will they also be ranked?**

Yes! As always, you can write in the name and address of any eligible person in the dedicated write-in space on the ballot and then RANK that person as if they were any other candidate on the ballot. For example, you could rank the person you wrote-in as your 1st choice and then select other candidates as your 2nd or 3rd choices. You are only allowed to write-in one name for each race. As with a candidate printed on the ballot, you are not required to rank all

candidates. **Keep in mind that, as always, a write-in candidate needs significant support from the community in order to have any realistic chance of impacting the outcome of the race.**

### **What kind of rules do we follow for Ranked Choice Voting in Easthampton?**

Our guidelines are contained in the City Ordinances under [Chapter 2, Article VI . Ranked Choice Voting](#). In addition, you can look at the [summary of tabulation settings for the software](#)

### **Why don't we use Ranked Choice Voting for all races on the ballot?**

Easthampton is only the second community in Massachusetts to implement Ranked Choice Voting (Cambridge was the first). So the decision was made to start slowly with the easier to understand single winner races. As time goes by, the other races (multi-winner races for At-Large City Councilor and School Committee members) could be added if the community feels it makes sense.