

University of Washington
Daniel J. Evans School of Public
Policy & Governance

RANKED CHOICE VOTING AND THE I/DD COMMUNITY

A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Prepared by

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June
2025

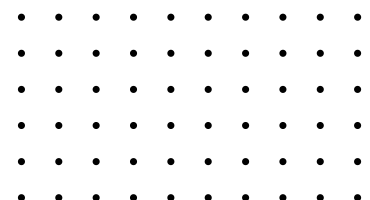


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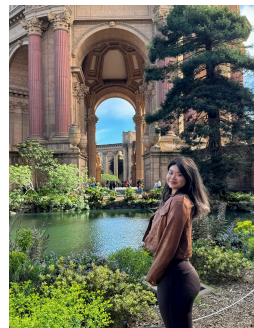
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PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

Introduction

The City of Seattle is going to use Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in some elections starting in 2027. To prepare for this change, we have identified the potential barriers to voting for people with disabilities. Specifically, this report researches the barriers and potential outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), and makes recommendations for changes and accommodations.

Ranked Choice Voting

Ranked Choice Voting is a method that gives voters the option to rank candidates from those they like most to those they like the least. If no candidate receives a majority of first-choice votes, the lowest-ranked candidate is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed based on voters' following preferences. This process continues until a candidate secures a majority¹.

Process

There is very little existing research at the intersection of I/DD and Ranked Choice Voting. Given this, our team put together a list of interview candidates for a qualitative interview process. We interviewed advocates for people with I/DD, election officials, guardians/caretakers, and people with I/DD in the Seattle area. These interviews informed us on the experiences of various relevant stakeholders.

Findings

Overall, our interviews revealed several general barriers to voting. These barriers *may* still exist after RCV is introduced. However, there is limited data on this. Additionally, we found that people wanted more education on RCV, which could be handouts, workshops, or information being made available online. Others noted a need for more in-person voting options and more help available at voting places.

Recommendations

In general, we have two categories of recommendations:

- Structural – built in to the system by the government
- Educational – ways to educate those impacted by this new system of voting prior to voting with RCV for the first time in 2027

¹ FairVote. “Ranked Choice Voting.” <https://fairvote.org/our-reforms/ranked-choice-voting/>.

DISCLAIMER

In the lead up to the implementation of Ranked Choice Voting in King County, many are asking questions about the implications of this policy change. One question that some have asked is whether RCV will have a disparate impact on voters with intellectual disabilities. Some politicians have even used this issue to raise concerns against RCV.

The objective of this project is to directly address that question by gathering qualitative information from those who know best: advocates, election administrators, and voters who identify as intellectually or developmentally disabled. As such, we have done our best to identify and categorize any and all possible issues that lie at the nexus of RCV implementation and voting rights for the I/DD community. Additionally, we have created a list of suggestions in the hopes of alleviating barriers to voting.

However, our report is neither an endorsement nor an indictment of RCV. A cursory examination of the findings will reveal that the majority of those interviewed—including every single person with I/DD—were unconcerned about the consequences of switching to Ranked Choice Voting *specifically*. Most were even optimistic about the change.

With a few exceptions, the barriers identified in this project should be read as systemic inequities that exist within King County’s current elections, and which may *continue* to pose problems after the implementation of RCV. As such, the switch to a new voting system offers an opportunity for the election administration and nongovernmental advocacy organizations alike to address these lingering issues head-on. The purpose of this report is simply to identify any potential problems at the nexus of RCV and the I/DD community, as well as ways to mitigate those problems. How our client – or other actors – use these results is outside of the scope of this project.

I/DD voters are capable of their own decision making – hence why we included them as primary stakeholders in our analysis. The authors of this report would like to emphasize the disability justice sentiment: **“nothing about us without us.”** No decisions should be made about disabled voters without engaging with disabled voters themselves. Additionally, we would like to note that our positionality is that of students with values rooted in disability justice, but still in a position of power given our access to higher education and resources.

This report was prepared by students at the Evans School of Public Policy & Governance who are listed as its authors. Disability Rights Washington provided assistance identifying interview subjects. The research, writing and recommendations contained in this report are the work of the identified authors. These views and recommendations are solely those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of Disability Rights Washington or any other organization.

All findings and recommendations within this report are academic and nonpartisan. The authors of this report kindly request that no part of this report be quoted or taken out of context for the purpose of endorsing a particular political agenda.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank everyone who supported this research project, including but not limited to: our capstone advisor, Matt Steuerwalt, our in-class peer reviewers, David Lord and Nilu Jenks, and the Evans School Capstone Coordinating Team. Thank you to the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance for the continued support and resources utilized in this project.

1 Background

Each academic year, the Evans School at the University of Washington entertains suggestions for capstone projects for graduate students. In the Fall of 2024, Disability Rights Washington submitted a proposal asking for research into the barriers and possible accommodations for voters who have intellectual or developmental disabilities in Ranked Choice elections. This proposal was accepted, and the result is this report.

Disability Rights Washington (DRW) is a private non-profit organization that serves individuals with disabilities in Washington state through the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy System. DRW aims to advance the dignity, equality, and self-determination of all people with disabilities by addressing issues centered on access to services, protection from abuse and neglect, and supporting families to create an inclusive society.

DRW Website: <https://disabilityrightswa.org/>

While DRW serves all those with disabilities, this study focuses on those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). “Intellectual and developmental disability” is an umbrella term referring to many conditions and disabilities. Intellectual disabilities are acquired prior to the age of eighteen and are characterized by differences in intellectual functioning or adaptive behavior. Developmental disabilities are a broader category that may be intellectual or physical, and result in unique challenges when interacting with a world centered around able-bodied access.² Given that voting systems have historically been exclusionary of disabled people, it is necessary to examine this issue through the lens of disability rights and barriers to equitable access.

The City of Seattle is preparing to implement ranked choice voting in 2027. Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is a voting method that gives voters the option to rank candidates in order of preference. If no candidate receives a majority of first-choice votes, the lowest-ranked candidate is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed based on subsequent preferences. This process continues until a candidate secures a majority³.

Though relatively new in the space of American voting systems, Ranked Choice Voting has recently been implemented in a number of jurisdictions. In theory, the RCV model provides a more holistic voting experience that may promote more equitable and representative outcomes. Whether or not this change comes with additional barriers is yet to be thoroughly researched. As

² National Institute of Health. “About Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDDs) | NICHD - Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development,” November 9, 2021. <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/idds/conditioninfo>.

³ FairVote. “Ranked Choice Voting.” <https://fairvote.org/our-reforms/ranked-choice-voting/>.

King County moves forward with the implementation of RCV, understanding what these barriers might be will be critical to mitigating them.

1.1 Project Scope and Research Questions

This project aims to answer the question: Are there challenges associated with the upcoming implementation of Ranked Choice Voting in King County for intellectually and developmentally disabled voters? If so, how can those challenges be addressed?

This project consists of two parts: first, we have conducted a review of the existing literature. Second, we have collected qualitative information through interviews with those who will be impacted by the implementation of RCV in King County, as well as those who have experience in jurisdictions where RCV is already implemented. With regard to the interviews, we categorized the qualitative data by interviewee: advocates, election officials and representatives, guardians, and voters with I/DD.

After categorizing and analyzing our data, we designed recommendations for advocacy organizations to support individuals within each category, as well as structural changes regarding ballot design, plain language, and accessibility. These recommendations have been presented in an effort to inform the identification and mitigation of barriers to voting for those in the I/DD community, both in RCV and traditional elections.

2 Literature Review

Seattle’s planned implementation of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in 2027 marks a significant shift in its electoral process, raising important questions about accessibility, voter comprehension, and equitable participation. RCV is widely promoted as a means of enhancing democratic representation, mitigating the spoiler effect, and incentivizing more civil campaign dynamics. However, its complexity presents challenges, particularly for groups that have historically faced barriers to voting. Among these groups, voters with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) may encounter difficulties ranking multiple candidates, understanding the vote redistribution process, and navigating ballot design.

RCV has gained traction across the United States, with adoption in major cities such as New York and Portland, as well as statewide in Maine and Alaska. While advocates argue that RCV increases voter engagement and electoral legitimacy, empirical research suggests that its impact is not uniform across all demographics. Studies have found disparities in voter comprehension and participation among racial minorities, older voters, individuals with lower levels of formal education, and voters with disabilities.⁴ These disparities raise concerns about whether RCV advances electoral equity or inadvertently exacerbates participation gaps.

This literature review synthesizes research on the general state of RCV, its impact across different demographics, case studies from jurisdictions that have implemented it, and accessibility challenges that disproportionately affect voters with I/DD. It explores how various voter groups experience RCV differently and what policy interventions might mitigate potential barriers. By analyzing empirical findings and real-world case studies, this review aims to provide insights into how advocacy organizations can support voters with I/DD navigating Seattle’s RCV election, maximizing accessibility and equitable participation.

2.1 The Current State of Ranked Choice Voting

Across the United States, jurisdictions are increasingly implementing RCV as an alternative to traditional plurality elections. Unlike single-choice voting, where the candidate with the most votes wins regardless of whether they secure a majority, RCV allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference. If no candidate receives a majority of first-choice votes, the lowest-ranked candidate is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed based on subsequent preferences. This process continues until a candidate secures a majority.⁵

⁴ Donovan, Todd, Caroline Tolbert, and Samuel Harper. “Demographic Differences in Understanding and Utilization of Ranked Choice Voting.” *Social Science Quarterly* 103, no. 7 (2022): 1539–50.

⁵ Copper, Alexandra, and Ruth Greenwood. “Civic-Benefits_Ranked-Choice-Voting.Pdf.” 2022.

Advocates argue that RCV enhances democratic representation by reducing vote-splitting and strategic voting, allowing voters to express their true preferences without concern that their votes will be wasted⁶. The system is also credited with encouraging more positive campaign strategies, as candidates must appeal to a broader range of voters to secure second- and third-choice rankings. Research on voter behavior suggests that RCV can reduce negative campaigning since candidates benefit from maintaining favorability among a wider segment of the electorate.⁷

Studies suggest that RCV enhances democratic representation by reducing vote-splitting and strategic voting, allowing voters to express their true preferences without worrying about wasting their vote. The system is also credited with encouraging more positive campaigning, as candidates must appeal to a broader range of voters to gain second- and third-choice rankings⁸. In addition, RCV is seen as a tool for promoting equity and reducing polarization. By requiring candidates to win with broader support rather than narrow pluralities, RCV can limit the advantage of polarizing candidates in low-turnout primaries and encourage coalition-building. Early evidence from places like Alaska suggests that ranked systems reward candidates who appeal across ideological lines, helping to reduce political fragmentation⁹. From this perspective, RCV can be not only a way to improve voter experience but also a structural reform that supports more inclusive and representative outcomes.

However, critics emphasize that RCV introduces additional complexity, which may disadvantage certain populations. Studies indicate that voter error rates are higher under RCV than under traditional voting methods, particularly among those with limited educational backgrounds or little experience with preferential voting systems.¹⁰ The cognitive demands of ranking multiple candidates and understanding how votes transfer between rounds may contribute to higher rates of ballot exhaustion, where votes are discarded in later rounds because voters fail to fully utilize the ranking system.¹¹

Administrative challenges further complicate RCV implementation. Election officials must redesign ballots, conduct extensive voter education, and ensure that voting systems can accurately process ranked votes. Some jurisdictions have experienced delays in reporting results,

⁶ McCune, David, and Lori McCune. "Does the Choice of Preferential Voting Method Matter? An Empirical Study Using Ranked Choice Elections in the United States." *Representation* 60, no. 1 (January 2, 2024): 1–16.

⁷ "2022 Ranked Choice Voting Year in Review - FairVote," n.d.

⁸ Donovan, Todd, Caroline Tolbert, and Kellen Gracey. "Campaign Civility under Preferential and Plurality Voting." *Electoral Studies* 42 (June 2016): 157–63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2016.02.009>.

⁹ Clelland, Jeanne N. "Ranked Choice Voting And Condorcet Failure in the Alaska 2022 Special Election: How Might Other Voting Systems Compare?" arXiv, April 11, 2024.

¹⁰ Donovan, Todd, Caroline Tolbert, and Samuel Harper. "Demographic Differences in Understanding and Utilization of Ranked Choice Voting." *Social Science Quarterly* 103, no. 7 (2022): 1539–50.

¹¹ McCune, David, and Lori McCune. "Does the Choice of Preferential Voting Method Matter? An Empirical Study Using Ranked Choice Elections in the United States."

leading to concerns about election integrity.¹² The increased administrative burden of implementing RCV raises questions about whether the benefits of the system outweigh its costs, particularly in jurisdictions with limited resources for voter education and election administration.

2.2 Implementation of RCV in Different U.S. Jurisdictions

Examining the experiences of various U.S. jurisdictions that have implemented RCV offers valuable insights into best practices and potential obstacles that Seattle may encounter during its transition.

2.2.1 *New York City*

In 2021, New York City implemented RCV for primary and special elections, marking one of the most significant adoptions of the system in the United States. The city undertook extensive voter education efforts, including multilingual informational campaigns and community outreach, to familiarize residents with the new voting process. While these initiatives reached many voters, some disparities in ballot comprehension persisted. For instance, older adults and non-English-speaking populations reported challenges in understanding the ranking system, contributing to higher instances of ballot errors and incomplete rankings.¹³ However, these issues were not uniformly widespread and are largely attributed to gaps in outreach and accessibility rather than the ineffectiveness of the RCV system. Initial technical hurdles such as discrepancies in vote tabulation underscored the importance of training for election staff and investment in reliable voting infrastructure.

2.2.2 *Portland, Oregon*

Portland's adoption of RCV in 2024 aimed to enhance representation within the city council. The transition was accompanied by significant reforms, including increasing the number of city council seats and restructuring electoral districts to better reflect the city's diverse demographics. Early reports indicated disparities in participation rates among different demographic groups. Minority and lower-income voters were less likely to fully utilize the ranking system, resulting in higher rates of ballot exhaustion.¹⁴ These findings suggest that while RCV has the potential to improve representation, its success is contingent upon effective voter education and engagement strategies that address the specific needs of diverse communities.

¹² National Conference of State Legislatures. "Ranked Choice Voting in Practice: Implementation Considerations for Policymakers."

¹³ National Conference of State Legislatures. "Ranked Choice Voting in Practice: Implementation Considerations for Policymakers." 2023.

¹⁴ Multnomah County Elections Division Communications Office. "Multnomah County Elections Releases Data Detailing How Portland Voters Filled out Ranked-Choice Ballots | Multnomah County," December 9, 2024.

2.2.3 Alaska

Alaska's statewide implementation of RCV in 2020, combined with a top four primary system, represented a substantial shift in the state's electoral process. The reform aimed to provide voters with more choices and reduce partisan polarization. However, residents in rural areas, particularly Indigenous communities, expressed concerns regarding the complexity of the new system. The vast geographical expanse of Alaska posed additional challenges in disseminating voter education materials and ensuring that all communities had access to necessary resources. Furthermore, delays in vote tabulation due to logistical constraints highlighted the need for tailored approaches that consider the unique geographical and cultural contexts of the electorate.¹⁵ Despite these issues, Alaska voters voted to retain RCV in a 2024 statewide referendum, narrowly defeating a ballot measure to repeal the system¹⁶. This outcome suggests that while the implementation of RCV in Alaska remains uneven, there is sustained support for RCV's role in shaping more inclusive electoral outcomes.

2.2.4 Utah and Virginia

Several counties in Utah and Virginia have piloted RCV in local elections, offering insights into its application in smaller jurisdictions. In Utah, municipalities such as Payson and Vineyard participated in the Municipal Alternative Voting Methods Pilot Project, allowing them to adopt RCV for local elections. Feedback from these pilots indicated that while some voters found the system intuitive, others experienced confusion related to ballot design and the mechanics of vote redistribution. These cases emphasize the necessity of clear and accessible ballot designs, as well as comprehensive voter education programs to facilitate a smooth transition to RCV.¹⁷

2.3 Demographic Disparities in the Impact of RCV

While RCV is designed to enhance electoral representation, existing research suggests that its effects vary significantly across different demographic groups. Factors such as race, socioeconomic status, age, and education level play a crucial role in how voters engage with and understand RCV ballots. Although advocates emphasize that RCV allows for more equitable election outcomes by reducing vote-splitting and encouraging broader participation, studies indicate that some groups – particularly those historically underrepresented in the electoral process – may encounter greater challenges with ranking candidates or completing ballots as intended^{18,19}. These patterns therefore have raised ongoing concerns about whether RCV supports

¹⁵ NCSL. "Ranked Choice Voting in Practice: Implementation Considerations for Policymakers." 2023.

¹⁶ Ballotpedia. "Alaska Ballot Measure 2, Repeal Top-Four Ranked-Choice Voting Initiative (2024)."

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Donovan, Todd, Caroline Tolbert, and Kellen Gracey. "Self-Reported Understanding of Ranked-Choice Voting." *Social Science Quarterly* 100, no. 5 (2019): 1768–76.

¹⁹ Coll, Joseph A. "Demographic Disparities Using Ranked-Choice Voting? Ranking Difficulty, Under-Voting, and the 2020 Democratic Primary." *Politics and Governance* 9, no. 2 (June 15, 2021): 293–305.

more equitable participation across different communities or if may unintentionally reflect existing barriers to equitable voter participation in some contexts.

2.3.1 RCV and Racial Minorities

Several studies indicate that racial minorities—particularly Black and Hispanic voters—face greater challenges with RCV ballots compared to white voters. Research on New York City’s 2021 primary elections, the largest municipal implementation of RCV in the U.S., found that voters in predominantly Black and Hispanic neighborhoods were less likely to rank multiple candidates, leading to higher rates of ballot exhaustion²⁰. In contrast, voters in wealthier, predominantly white areas demonstrated greater utilization of the ranking system, suggesting an uneven adaptation to the RCV format based on racial and socioeconomic factors²¹.

Similar patterns were observed in Portland, Oregon, where early reports on RCV’s implementation showed disparities in participation rates among racial minorities. Voters from historically marginalized communities were more likely to cast incomplete ballots or rank fewer candidates, increasing the likelihood that their votes would be discarded in later rounds of counting²². This pattern raises concerns about how the complexity of RCV may interact with existing structural barriers – such as unequal access to voter education or language support – resulting in uneven experiences across different voter groups.

The underlying reasons for these disparities are complex. Some research attributes lower RCV participation among racial minorities to limited access to voter education materials, particularly those tailored to non-English-speaking communities²³. Additionally, studies highlight the role of historical distrust in electoral systems, where communities of color—especially Black voters—have faced systemic disenfranchisement. As a result, uncertainty or lack of familiarity with new voting systems may deter full engagement with RCV²⁴.

2.3.2 Socioeconomic Disparities in RCV Participation

RCV also presents notable disparities based on socioeconomic status, particularly regarding educational background and income levels. Multiple studies find that voters with lower educational attainment—those with a high school diploma or less—are less likely to fully rank candidates, increasing their likelihood of casting an exhausted ballot²⁵. The ranking process

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Donovan, Todd, Caroline Tolbert, and Samuel Harper. “Demographic Differences in Understanding and Utilization of Ranked Choice Voting.” *Social Science Quarterly* 103, no. 7 (2022): 1539–50.

²² Multnomah County Elections Division Communications Office. “Multnomah County Elections Releases Data Detailing How Portland Voters Filled out Ranked-Choice Ballots | Multnomah County,” December 9, 2024.

²³ Schur, Lisa, and Meera Adya. “Sidelined or Mainstreamed? Political Participation and Attitudes of People with Disabilities in the United States.” *Social Science Quarterly* 94, no. 3 (2013): 811–39.

²⁴ Coll, Joseph A.

²⁵ Donovan, Todd, Caroline Tolbert, and Samuel Harper. “Demographic Differences in Understanding and Utilization of Ranked Choice Voting.” *Social Science Quarterly* 103, no. 7 (2022): 1539–50.

demands a higher level of decision-making and comprehension, which can be particularly challenging for individuals who lack access to voter education resources or have had limited civic engagement opportunities²⁶.

Additionally, lower-income voters face logistical challenges that may compound difficulties with RCV participation. In jurisdictions with limited early voting options, individuals who work multiple jobs or have irregular work schedules may have fewer opportunities to attend voter education sessions or fully familiarize themselves with the RCV system²⁷. In places like Alaska, where RCV has been introduced alongside other electoral reforms, rural and lower-income voters reported higher levels of confusion compared to wealthier urban populations, largely due to disparities in access to outreach programs²⁸.

Another concern is the impact of digital divides on voter education. Many municipalities have relied on online tools and digital outreach to educate the public about RCV, assuming widespread internet access. However, research suggests that lower-income individuals are less likely to have reliable broadband access or digital literacy skills, further reducing their ability to seek out and understand election information²⁹. This digital divide exacerbates existing socioeconomic barriers to voter engagement, disproportionately impacting lower-income communities.

2.3.3 Age-Based Disparities in RCV Comprehension

Older adults, particularly those over 65, report higher levels of confusion with RCV ballots. Research from New York City's 2021 primary elections found that older voters were more likely to leave races blank or rank only a single candidate, leading to higher rates of ballot exhaustion³⁰. These findings suggest that familiarity with traditional voting methods plays a significant role in a voter's ability to adapt to RCV.

For many older voters, decades of voting experience have reinforced a single-choice mentality, making the transition to ranking candidates cognitively demanding³¹. Additionally, physical impairments—such as vision issues or motor difficulties—can make reading complex ballots and filling out multiple rankings more challenging. Advocates have called for larger font sizes, clearer ballot designs, and increased poll worker support to better assist older voters –

²⁶ Agran, Martin, William MacLean, and Katherine Anne Kitchen Andren. “‘I Never Thought About It’: Teaching People with Intellectual Disability to Vote.” *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities* 50, no. 4 (2015): 388–96.

²⁷ Schur, Lisa, and Meera Adya. “Sidelined or Mainstreamed? Political Participation and Attitudes of People with Disabilities in the United States.” *Social Science Quarterly* 94, no. 3 (2013): 811–39.

²⁸ “2022 Ranked Choice Voting Year in Review - FairVote,” 2022.

²⁹ U.S. Election Assistance Commission. “Studies and Reports | U.S. Election Assistance Commission.” 2022.

³⁰ Donovan, Todd, Caroline Tolbert, and Samuel Harper. “Demographic Differences in Understanding and Utilization of Ranked Choice Voting.” 2022.

³¹ Schur, Lisa, and Meera Adya. “Sidelined or Mainstreamed? Political Participation and Attitudes of People with Disabilities in the United States.” 2013.

particularly in ways that comply with federal and state requirements ensuring that voting materials and ballots are accessible to individuals with disabilities³².

Conversely, younger voters—particularly those under 30—have shown greater enthusiasm for RCV, but their participation patterns remain inconsistent. A study of RCV elections in Maine found that younger voters were more likely to fully rank their ballots, indicating a higher willingness to engage with the system’s complexities³³. However, younger voters also demonstrated higher levels of ballot errors, often due to misinterpreting instructions or mistakenly ranking multiple candidates in the same position³⁴.

Despite these errors, RCV has been linked to higher youth voter turnout in some elections, largely because it encourages third-party participation and increases the competitiveness of races³⁵. Younger voters tend to favor electoral reforms that expand choice and reduce the dominance of two-party politics, making them more receptive to RCV’s structure. However, their higher rates of ballot mistakes underscore the need for clearer instructional materials and interactive voter education initiatives that cater specifically to younger, first-time voters.

2.4 Challenges of RCV for Intellectually Disabled Voters

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) offers an opportunity to enhance democratic representation, yet its implementation must consider the unique barriers faced by intellectually and developmentally disabled (I/DD) voters. Many of these challenges are not new or exclusive to RCV—I/DD voters have long faced obstacles in navigating ballot design, poll worker assistance, and systemic barriers to voter participation under traditional single-choice voting systems³⁶. However, RCV introduces additional cognitive demands, making accessibility a central consideration for its successful implementation. By examining the challenges that I/DD voters face and comparing them to pre-existing accessibility concerns, election officials can take a proactive approach to ensure that RCV fosters inclusivity rather than reinforcing historical voting disparities.

2.4.1 Cognitive Complexity and Decision-Making Barriers

One of the primary challenges I/DD voters encounter under any voting system is decision-making overload, particularly when ballots require multiple layers of comparison. Traditional voting methods already pose cognitive demands for individuals with I/DD, as voters

³² Agran, Martin, William MacLean, and Katherine Anne Kitchen Andren. “‘I Never Thought About It’: Teaching People with Intellectual Disability to Vote.” *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities* 50, no. 4 (2015): 388–96.

³³ “2022 Ranked Choice Voting Year in Review - FairVote,” 2022.

³⁴ U.S. Election Assistance Commission. “Studies and Reports | U.S. Election Assistance Commission.” 2022.

³⁵ Coll, Joseph A. “Demographic Disparities Using Ranked-Choice Voting? Ranking Difficulty, Under-Voting, and the 2020 Democratic Primary.” *Politics and Governance* 9, no. 2 (June 15, 2021): 293–305.

³⁶ Schur, Lisa, and Meera Adya. “Sidelined or Mainstreamed? Political Participation and Attitudes of People with Disabilities in the United States.” 2013.

must assess candidate qualifications, understand policy positions, and complete their ballots without external assistance. RCV expands on this process by introducing ranking-based decisions, requiring voters to:

- Compare multiple candidates at once
- Assign an order of preference rather than selecting a single candidate
- Predict how their vote might transfer if their top choice is eliminated

For voters with cognitive impairments, this shift from binary selection to ranked evaluation can be difficult to process, particularly if election materials and voter education efforts do not adequately explain the ranking system³⁷. However, research also shows that similar barriers exist in down-ballot races in traditional elections, where voters may struggle with long ballots, multiple-choice races, or unfamiliar candidates³⁸. These findings suggest that RCV may not inherently create new obstacles but amplifies existing ones, emphasizing the need for effective voter education and accessible ballot design to mitigate confusion.

Studies from previous RCV elections suggest that I/DD voters are more likely to rank only one or two candidates, increasing the risk of ballot exhaustion—a phenomenon where a ballot becomes inactive in later rounds of counting due to incomplete rankings³⁹. Yet, under traditional systems, I/DD voters also face higher rates of ballot mistakes, undervoting, and skipped races, suggesting that ballot usability issues extend beyond RCV alone⁴⁰. These findings highlight the importance of targeted voter education efforts to ensure that RCV remains accessible and intuitive for all voters.

2.4.2 Ballot Design and Accessibility Issues

Ballot design plays a critical role in voting accessibility. For I/DD voters, the ability to successfully complete a ballot depends on clear, intuitive layouts and unambiguous instructions. While traditional ballots already present challenges for voters with cognitive disabilities, RCV ballots introduce ranking grids that require scanning across multiple rows and columns, which may be visually overwhelming or cognitively taxing⁴¹.

However, research on accessible ballot design suggests that simplified ranking layouts, plain-language instructions, and high-contrast formatting can significantly improve usability for

³⁷ Agran, Martin, William MacLean, and Katherine Anne Kitchen Andren. “‘I Never Thought About It’: Teaching People with Intellectual Disability to Vote.” 2015.

³⁸ Schur, Lisa, and Meera Adya. “Sidelined or Mainstreamed? Political Participation and Attitudes of People with Disabilities in the United States.” 2013.

³⁹ Donovan, Todd, Caroline Tolbert, and Samuel Harper. “Demographic Differences in Understanding and Utilization of Ranked Choice Voting.” 2022.

⁴⁰ U.S. Election Assistance Commission. “Studies and Reports | U.S. Election Assistance Commission.” 2022.

⁴¹ National Council on Disability. “Experience of Voters with Disabilities in the 2012 Election Cycle - Content Details -.” 2013. https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/GOVPUB-Y3_D63_3-PURL-gpo75927.

I/DD voters⁴². Many of these best practices apply to both RCV and traditional ballots, as past studies have found that complex ballot structures, including multi-page ballots and dense text, create barriers in all election systems⁴³. Potential improvements that could enhance both RCV and traditional ballots include:

- Step-by-step ranking instructions using plain language and large fonts
- Intuitive ballot layouts that limit excessive scanning across columns
- Error prevention tools for digital ballots, allowing voters to correct mistakes before submission

Some jurisdictions, such as Maine and San Francisco, have piloted touchscreen ballot interfaces that guide voters through the ranking process one step at a time, rather than presenting an entire ranking grid at once⁴⁴. This method has shown positive outcomes for voters with I/DD, as it mirrors structured decision-making approaches often used in cognitive accessibility programs. Expanding these solutions across more jurisdictions could make RCV elections as accessible—or even more accessible—than traditional voting systems.

2.4.3 Poll Worker Training and Support Gaps

Regardless of the voting system, poll worker training is essential for ensuring that I/DD voters receive appropriate assistance while preserving their independence and voting rights. However, studies have consistently found gaps in poll worker training when it comes to supporting voters with disabilities, whether in traditional elections or RCV-based elections⁴⁵. Common issues include:

- Poll workers failing to proactively offer accommodations due to a lack of training on I/DD voting rights
- Confusion over how to provide assistance without interfering with voter autonomy
- Inconsistent enforcement of ADA and HAVA protections, leading to unequal experiences at polling places

During Alaska’s first statewide RCV election, disability rights groups reported inconsistent voter assistance across precincts, reinforcing a long-standing issue that predates RCV implementation⁴⁶. To ensure that RCV elections uphold accessibility standards, jurisdictions must prioritize comprehensive poll worker training that includes:

- Best practices for explaining RCV in simple, digestible terms

⁴² Schur, Lisa, and Meera Adya. “Sideline or Mainstreamed? Political Participation and Attitudes of People with Disabilities in the United States.” *Social Science Quarterly* 94, no. 3 (2013): 811–39.

⁴³ U.S. Election Assistance Commission. “Studies and Reports | U.S. Election Assistance Commission,” 2023.

⁴⁴ National Council on Disability. “Experience of Voters with Disabilities in the 2012 Election Cycle - Content Details -,” 2013.

⁴⁵ Schur, Lisa, and Meera Adya. “Sideline or Mainstreamed? Political Participation and Attitudes of People with Disabilities in the United States.” 2013.

⁴⁶ National Conference of State Legislatures. “Ranked Choice Voting in Practice: Implementation Considerations for Policymakers.” National Conference of State Legislatures. 2023.

- Procedures for accommodating voters with I/DD without influencing their decisions
- Strategies for reinforcing ballot confidence to reduce anxiety or hesitation among I/DD voters

By addressing these pre-existing poll worker training gaps, election officials can make RCV elections more accessible than past traditional voting systems, rather than allowing existing disparities to persist.

2.4.4 Legal and Structural Barriers to I/DD Voter Participation

Beyond cognitive and procedural challenges, many I/DD voters face legal barriers that impact their ability to vote, regardless of the voting method. Some states impose voting restrictions on individuals under guardianship, even though federal laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Help America Vote Act (HAVA) prohibit voter discrimination⁴⁷.

However, research suggests that RCV does not inherently create additional legal restrictions on I/DD voters—rather, the barriers that affect their participation are long-standing issues within the electoral system. Many I/DD voters continue to experience transportation challenges, a lack of accessible voter registration processes, and limited outreach efforts, all of which contribute to lower participation rates⁴⁸. Addressing these structural barriers could improve both RCV and traditional election accessibility, ensuring a more equitable voting experience for all.

While RCV introduces unique cognitive and procedural considerations, many of the barriers that I/DD voters face are not new—they have existed within traditional voting systems for decades. Ballot complexity, limited poll worker training, and legal restrictions have historically hindered full participation, and without proactive reforms, these issues will persist regardless of voting method. However, the introduction of RCV also presents an opportunity to make elections more accessible, if jurisdictions implement inclusive ballot design, robust voter education programs, and specialized poll worker training. By approaching RCV implementation with accessibility at the forefront, election officials can not only mitigate challenges for I/DD voters but also improve voting access for all marginalized communities.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ National Council on Disability. “Experience of Voters with Disabilities in the 2012 Election Cycle - Content Details -.” 2013.

3 Research Methods

We began by reviewing the existing literature to analyze potential challenges faced by voters with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As a result of the lack of academic research on this specific topic, we chose to focus on related subjects, such as barriers to voting in general and ballot usability.

To further analyze qualitative perspectives on voting and accessibility, we decided to survey jurisdictions that have previously implemented RCV and therefore have experience addressing the challenges this new system poses for the I/DD community. To do so, we identified organizations and interviewees, including those in charge of implementing RCV at the state or local level, and organizations that work with and advocate for people with I/DD in places that currently use ranked choice voting. We worked with these groups to identify specific voters with I/DD who would be willing to be interviewed, so as to gain insight into their experience.

3.1 Role of the Literature Review

The reviewed literature suggests that most of the barriers to accessibility and voting are consistent with traditional voting methods, and not selective to voters with I/DD. However, we can safely assume that the decision to rank candidates in order of preference instead of making a single choice creates an additional layer of logical processing that may impact voters.

3.1.1 Literature Review Synopsis

Given the lack of academic research on this topic, we have chosen to focus on related obstacles and potential obstacles that might illuminate this topic. Additionally, given Washington's mail-only elections, we focused on obstacles that are specific to, or might be exacerbated by, the use of remotely cast ballots. Research and qualitative perspectives from those few RCV jurisdictions that use mail-only elections were particularly valuable.

One consistent finding is that RCV education should take place right after the last election held with traditional voting, in order to decrease voter confusion. This may leave a relatively short time window depending on the election. Past studies also note that higher educational attainment level may be a factor in increased likelihood of ranking preferred candidates, and the unique intellectual abilities of the voters may cause outcomes to vary.

3.2 Qualitative Interviews

The interviews were conducted in a virtual setting over Zoom video conferencing platform, or by phone. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60-minutes on a date and time agreed between the interviewee and the consultants. Technological access and assistance was considered as needed

for the interviewee. When possible, we had at least 2 consultants participating in the interview. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for data keeping purposes, but specific identifiable personal information was not recorded or disclosed unless explicit consent was given or requested. The interviews were run through a transcription software to categorize and sort the gathered information. Upon completion of all interviews, we sorted the qualitative data into categories as appropriate to understand the scope of concerns about the process or implementation of ranked choice voting.

3.2.1 Interview Questions

We framed our questions with an intent to invite open-ended answers instead of limiting ourselves to a close-ended question. The questions primarily concern experiences with voting, known and expected barriers, perception of the political climate, and an open dialogue to hear more about the specific experiences of individuals with I/DD. For officials and administrators working closely with RCV and/or disabled individuals, we additionally asked if there have been any changes aimed at improving access and whether the organization or service is accounting for the needs and accessibility of underprivileged voters. For I/DD and voting advocates, our questions focused on the specifics of the change in the voting process, with specific regards to whether they have witnessed any barriers or significant changes associated with I/DD voters.

TABLE 1: Examples of Interview Questions

Category of Interviewee	Questions
Voters with Lived Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell us about how often you vote? • “What are some ways in which voting is hard for you?” • What is your understanding of Ranked Choice Voting? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For those who have voted like this before: what barriers do you face, or you perceive others face, using ranked choice voting? ○ For those who have not voted this way before: what are your concerns with ranked choice voting, if any? • Can you tell us about ways in which voting has been made easier for you? • Is there anything related to accessibility or voting education or (other) that you wish was different?

Advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you define barriers to voting? • What are your concerns, if any, about general barriers to voting for people with I/DD? • What, if any, are your concerns about people with I/DD voting in RCV elections? • What are your thoughts about the implementation process of moving to ranked choice voting? • What resources do you have to support people with I/DD in moving to ranked choice voting?
Election Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you experienced any significant changes in voter participation since implementing RCV? • Have you received any complaints/comments from people in the I/DD community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What is your relationship with advocate groups? • Does your administration take account of the needs of I/DD voters specifically before administering an election? • In your professional opinion, does RCV have the potential to create any barriers to voting for voters with I/DD? • Have you observed with RCV that some voters have problems ranking properly; or increased levels of incomplete ballots? Please describe. • Do you provide specialized training in RCV for poll workers, outreach workers? If yes, please provide materials. • Do you see increased spoiled ballots? Any connection with I/DD voting or seniors, other disabilities? Please provide data if you have some. • Do you see any additional difficulties for voters who are voting an RCV ballot on an accessible voting unit?
Elected Officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What percentage of your voters do you perceive as people with I/DD? • How does your office do outreach and voter engagement for people with I/DD?

3.2.2 Interviewees

To survey a properly diverse set of perspectives, we approached disability rights organizations, election boards and commissions, and regional disability and voter advocacy organizations to identify interview subjects. These interviewees ranged in experience from administering RCV elections to working with I/DD voters to lived experience with voting as a member of the I/DD community. In addition to reaching out to individuals we identified as having valuable insights, we also utilized the Disability Rights Washington and FairVote Washington networks to identify and contact potential interviewees.

The I/DD voters with lived experience who voluntarily participated in our interviews have been monetarily compensated for their participation. Elected officials and advocate leaders were not compensated.

TABLE 2: Interviewees

Interviewee Category	Interviewee Affiliation
Election Officials and Administrators	Arlington County (VA) Board of Elections
	Cambridge (MA) Election Commission
	City of Minneapolis - Elections and Voter Services
	King County RCV Advisory Committee
	State of Colorado
Advocacy Organizations	Cambridge (MA) Commission for Persons with Disabilities
	Disability Rights California
	Disability Rights Washington
	Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center

	Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (AK)
Voters with I/DD	Individuals from King County and Western Washington who identify as having an intellectual or developmental disability.

We had some instances of snowball sampling, where each interviewee who agreed to interviews recommended additional participants to be interviewed. We conducted and scheduled them as appropriate from February to April, 2025.

3.2.3 Response Categorization

The interviews and responses present a sample representation that is not inclusive of all voters with similar experiences. With the qualitative nature of the data, it is important to consider that although each response may bring depth and scope to our understanding, quantifying trends based on this sample may not be fully accurate. Although we strive to establish a safe interviewing environment, there is also the risk of self-reporting bias and general reticence to share sensitive information. Both of these issues raise concerns about the quality of data gathered. As such, all data should be reviewed with careful consideration of the context in which it was gathered.

3.3 Data Limitations

Given the qualitative nature of this project, our findings are limited by the number of interviews we were able to conduct within a relatively short time frame. For a more in-depth investigation, many more interviews would need to be conducted over more jurisdictions, over a period of many months or even years. Given these limitations, we chose to focus on a shorter list of jurisdictions and individuals with relevant experience.

We also chose to limit our pool of *lived-experience* interviewees to those who live in and around King County. This decision was made to avoid scheduling complications, as well as to narrow the scope of interest to those who will be most affected by the upcoming changes to the King County election system.

Finally, because we have not gathered any substantial quantitative data, this project cannot make any point estimate predictions about the statistical effects of RCV, nor create any confidence ranges about voter participation. At the moment, there are no large-scale datasets that contain both information about voter behavior and I/DD status. A more resource-intensive survey-based project might consider estimating these values.

4 Findings

4.1 Overview of Themes from Interviews

Through interviews with advocates, accessibility experts, and election administrators, several themes emerged that help illuminate the potential risks and opportunities posed by King County's upcoming implementation of Ranked Choice Voting. Many participants acknowledged the promise of RCV in expanding voter choice and potentially improving representation. However, they also emphasized that the benefits of this reform may not be equitably realized without proactive attention to accessibility.

While a few concerns about RCV were specific to its ranking system, most participants emphasized that challenges facing I/DD voters predate reform. However, it is possible that the introduction of RCV has the potential to compound barriers that *already exist* under traditional voting systems, including ballot design complexity, lack of plain language materials, limited outreach to disability communities, and inconsistent support for voter autonomy. These barriers intersect in ways that may further marginalize individuals who already face difficulty navigating the voting process.

Importantly, the interviews revealed strong consensus around several promising practices. These included the need for accessible and plain-language educational materials, expanded partnerships with community-based organizations, and improvements to remote and in-person voting support systems. While some elections officials noted that voters are not required to rank all candidates, and can use the ballot similarly to traditional elections, this approach does not address the deeper issue of equitable access to information and support. The remainder of this chapter explores these themes in greater depth, drawing on lived experiences and policy insights from the interviewees to identify strategies for a more inclusive transition to RCV.

This Chapter is organized by category of Interviewee; namely lived experience I/DD voters, Election Officials and Administrators, and I/DD community advocates.

4.2 Interviewees with Lived-Experience

Voters with I/DD represent a wide variety of cognitive and physical disabilities that present myriad varied challenges when it comes to voting. As such, responses varied widely from interview to interview. However, some common themes emerged that critically inform our understanding of the needs of the I/DD community.

Generally, voters with I/DD were not concerned about the difficulty of ranking candidates, nor confused about RCV generally. Most expressed either excitement or indifference to the

upcoming implementation. However, some concerns were raised about King County's ability to fully address existing equity concerns during the transition.

Most notably, voters believed that the new system would require expanded access to alternative methods for casting ballots and voter education. These alternatives include expanded in-person options, variable font sizes and colors, auditory and visual aids, and enhanced privacy. In particular, the lack of available in-person voting options for those who might be confused, or who require additional assistance was a major source of concern.

Providing as many avenues of access as possible to educational materials and ballots was the most widely agreed upon solution to these concerns.

4.2.1 Lived Experience - General Barriers to Voting

Multiple voters expressed frustration with the print size and/or ballot format used by King County. For voters with Dyslexia and other cognitive print disabilities, small, densely-populated text poses a serious problem for reading ballots and educational materials. One voter talked about his inability to distinguish between the bubbles used for different candidates, requiring him to seek assistance from his spouse. Another pointed out that ballots were rarely provided in large print (for her, large print means anything in 20-point font or above).

Other voters expressed a desire to receive ballots in more accessible alternative formats. For example, one voter with a cognitive print disability described her struggle reading black text printed on white paper. In the past, she had directly requested her paper ballots to be printed in different colors, namely gray and green, with limited success. These voters were generally in favor of expanding ballot format options, either by changing text size, color, or layout. Most agreed that suitable electronic alternatives would suffice.

Another frequently cited concern was the need for plain language on ballots and educational materials. Although the concept of ranking candidates was generally understood, several voters expressed doubts about King County's ability to communicate these changes to voters. Many expressed frustration with the amount of material provided for each election and the often overly-complicated terms used to explain ballot measures. All interviewed voters agreed that extensive use of plain language on voting materials was preferred.

*“One of the people that I frequently work with in my organization, as well as other organizations I’ve worked with, he has Down syndrome, so he’s very smart, but if you have things that are too wordy and not in **plain English**... I have been elected to be the one to assist with explaining it in a simpler way, if you will. Now, once it’s explained in a more simple fashion, he would have the ability ability to say, ‘Okay, I want this person first, this person second, this person third.’ But if you’re not understanding what you’re voting on, then that could be difficult for him.”*

A few voters suggested alternative methods of ballot design as well, including color-coding candidates, use of visual (non-textual) aids, and even video explanations of ballot measures and candidate profiles for print-disabled voters and those with other cognitive disabilities.

Additionally, most interviewed voters placed a high priority on privacy and independence. Although some required assistance when filling out ballots, they remained understandably adamant that they should maintain strict control over the content of their votes. Several voters expressed skepticism about voting systems that required I/DD and other disabled voters to seek assistance, even from friends and family. One voter described her experience with a family member who had influenced her vote while assisting her, and endorsed limited interaction between voters and assistants who may not be nonpartisan.

“My sister influenced my vote, she literally made me vote for something I didn’t want to vote for and it made me feel awful, it made me feel really disempowered. And there are a lot of people with disabilities that they don’t get any choice, you know, and they can’t just move out and move away from that. They’re stuck with their parents. They’re stuck with the siblings that are influencing the vote, or the caregiver or, you know, they don’t get to have privacy with the ballot.”

“When you are supporting somebody with voting, you cannot judge them for their vote. You also cannot threaten them and say, ‘Oh, well, if you vote for that person, you’re going to lose all your care, you’re going to lose all your support.’ That could be seen a pressure too, and a lot of people are not trained on that. We need to make sure that caregivers are not voting for people, that people are voting for themselves. And also, people need to know that they do have the right to vote, because some people under guardianship think they automatically don’t have the right to vote.”

Of course, this would require increased accessibility and independence under the current system, as well as strict nonpartisan controls on those who *do* provide assistance.

4.2.2 Lived Experience - Challenges Relevant to Mail-only RCV Elections

A commonly recurring theme among those interviewed was the need for more in-person voting options, and more accessibility where in-person voting was available. Many voters with I/DD prefer the experience of filling out their ballot in a polling place, where they can seek in-person assistance if they need it. In part, this was driven by a desire for more access to AVUs, but some expressed additional concerns about making mistakes on their ballots or having questions about the voting instructions. Even those voters who generally had no issues casting ballots by mail were aware of others in the I/DD community who struggled to vote remotely and would benefit from an in-person experience.

Despite this apparent desire for in-person options, of the I/DD voters interviewed for this project, only one knew the location of their nearest voting center. What's more, some seemed unaware that voting in-person was even an option in King County. The one voter who had made use of an in-person voting center reported a poor experience, as she was unable to cast her vote in person and simply provided with a ballot to be mailed-in.

However, not all feedback about mail-only elections was negative. One voter expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to vote from the privacy of her own home, having experienced difficulty voting in person before the switch. In fact, all voters generally agreed that the ability to vote by mail was a good thing. However, they stressed that providing *as many options as possible* was critical to making the process more accessible. To these voters, this meant the ready availability of vote-by-mail, ballot drop-boxes, in-person ballot submission, and AVUs. Multiple voters even suggested online or electronic voting options.

Most of those interviewed were not worried about the upcoming implementation of RCV; some were even excited about the change. However, a frequent topic of discussion was educational materials, and how they would be distributed in the lead up to the first RCV election. Many of these concerns overlap with those discussed in section 4.3.1 (print size, plain language, etc.), but some were unique.

Several voters expressed a desire to see educational materials distributed in a format other than printed word. Voters who identified as “auditory learners” preferred videos or even radio broadcasts to pamphlets. The idea of using videos to explain RCV was widely accepted among those interviewed, although there was disagreement about the best place for them to be posted. One voter and advocate recommended social media as the best option, while others indicated that

television broadcasts, such as the news, would be better. A few voters indicated that libraries and community centers were good places to post information as well.

Whether in print or otherwise, all interviewees agreed that using as much plain language as possible was a critical aspect of effective design for educational materials. One voter suggested inserting a short, plain-language summary at the beginning of all distributed materials.

As with ballot access, all voters agreed that offering as many educational opportunities as possible through as many mediums as possible was the best policy. Most of those interviewed were affiliated with community organizations that served the needs of others in the I/DD community. As such, they were eager to offer advice on how to ensure the transition to RCV proceeds smoothly. These findings suggest that community-driven focus groups and advisory boards would be an effective way for King County to engage with the I/DD community during the transition period.

4.2.3 Lived Experience - Perception of Elections and Election Administrators

The many challenges I/DD interviewees had experienced while voting appears to have had a detrimental impact on their perception of the “fairness” of elections in Washington. However, most I/DD voters seem to have favorable opinions of the officials, volunteers, and others who are *running* the elections.

Of those interviewed, only one reported a bad experience with election workers stemming from an inability to communicate her need for an alternative voting method. The issue was eventually resolved through the use of an AVU, but not before a long and exhausting back-and-forth. The rest of the interviewees report only pleasant interactions.

The efficacy and reliability of the State’s election system itself is another matter. Some interviewees reported feeling underserved by the election system, either because the voting options available to them did not suit their needs or because they had simply not taken advantage of the assistance opportunities available to them (in many cases, this was because they were unaware of available opportunities).

4.3 Election Official and Administrator Interviewees

Generally, election administrators had favorable opinions of RCV and foresaw no significant barriers in terms of implementation. However, most administrators did not report that they spent much time specifically considering the experience of I/DD voters.

Administrators identified confusing ballot design and delayed responsiveness to spoiled ballots (especially with mail-in-ballots) as the biggest challenges that may be relevant to disabled voters. In particular, election officials stressed the need for simple ballots that were easy to read and to fill out, in-person assistance for voters who may be confused or who attempted to submit improper ballots, and extensive voter education campaigns that prepare voters to rank candidates in advance of the election.

Notably, although confusion stemming from poor *ballot design* was a concern, no administrators or election officials reported experiencing a meaningful increase in voter confusion resulting from the *concept* of ranked choice voting, within the I/DD community or otherwise.⁴⁹ Most considered the process of ranking candidates simple enough to be intuitive to all voters. Furthermore, none reported *any* implementation challenges so great that they thought the switch to RCV had been a mistake. In fact, every administrator interviewed was either neutral or positive about the overall effects of RCV in elections.

4.3.1 Administrators - General Challenges Implementing RCV

Every election official interviewed expressed the general opinion that the benefits of RCV outweighed the costs. Those with direct experience implementing the new voting system in formerly non-RCV jurisdictions saw few negative impacts beyond the typical challenges associated with administrative changes.

Voter confusion or inability to understand the process of ranking candidates was not considered a serious problem in any surveyed jurisdiction. In Minnesota, post-election surveys usually indicate that more than 90% of voters find the ranking system “simple.” Furthermore, multiple officials expressed the value of explaining to voters that, although they *may* rank candidates, they are not required to. So, for any voters who are confused by or uncomfortable with the new system, they can simply treat the ballot as if it were single-choice and pick the one candidate they prefer.

“We had 97% say simple, 3% difficult. And going back just from 2013 it goes 87%, 92%, 89%, 97% in the simple category. Or there's a percent or two here of people who say, I don't know. So basically, when I talk to groups, I say 90% or so report that it's simple to use, and something like five to 10% would say it's difficult.”

⁴⁹ When asked specifically about the I/DD community, none of the administrators interviewed were able to recall a time when an individual identifying as intellectually disabled had complained or expressed concerns about RCV ballots, at least insofar as such complaints related to their disability.

One election official from Minnesota recalled that implementation of RCV in that state was fairly straightforward. Most voters were able to quickly adapt to the new system, and generally seemed satisfied with the results:

The most obvious challenge was designing ranked ballots in an intuitive and helpful manner. Fortunately, the Center for Civic Design and other advocacy organizations provided guidelines for designing RCV ballots in a user-friendly manner.⁵⁰

Several election officials in Cambridge, Massachusetts expressed similar concerns about ballot design. In particular, the practice of including a large number of candidates (often more than 20) on a single ballot was criticized for resulting in small print and tight grid layouts. This high-density grid-design is likely to increase ballot-marking mistakes, resulting in more spoiled or inaccurate ballots.⁵¹ Cambridge is one of the oldest RCV jurisdictions in the country, having employed the practice for certain elections since 1941. As such, many of its perceived ballot issues could be considered remnants of an outdated design process.

Grid layout was specifically identified as a problem in Arlington, Virginia as well, particularly for low-vision voters and those who struggle to mark ballots independently. To alleviate this problem, Arlington makes use of “enhanced digital” RCV ballots filled out online and printed out for submission. This system has received positive feedback from voters.

Another often cited component of successful RCV implementation was voter education. Both Minnesota and Cambridge distribute voter guides (including explanations of the Ranked Choice process) in the months leading up to each election, which were identified as invaluable resources for voters. One expert on election administration from Colorado, expressed the need for cooperation with non-government advocacy groups to promote voter education. According to her, education should begin as early as possible, but not before the last election held before the switch to RCV, so as to prevent confusion. Advocacy groups and community organizations can provide access to marginalized groups and individuals who may otherwise not engage with voter education materials.

4.3.2 Administrators - Challenges Specific to the I/DD Community

Officials who administer RCV elections were generally unaware of any broad barriers to voting faced by the I/DD community specifically. One administrator recalls witnessing only a single instance of an I/DD voter struggling with an RCV ballot, a situation which was effectively resolved by the quick response of the poll worker on duty.

⁵⁰ See Appendix A

⁵¹ See Appendix B

As such, specific training for poll workers on assisting I/DD voters is generally absent from poll worker training schemes. Administrators working with limited time and budgets often do not consider it a high priority.

“With ranking, I think one of the other things that's really important, and this happens a lot with third party groups and campaigns, they'll start educating voters on how to mark a ballot before the voter is even close to the election, or before they even receive the ballot at home. And in my experience, the first moment that most voters are going to pay attention to how to mark their ballot is when they're opening their mail ballot at home or they're standing in line at the voting location. So investing in a bunch of money with commercials or mailers or anything prior to that, I don't think makes a lot of sense, because most people are not paying attention at all until their ballot is in front of them. The interaction that they have when the ballot is in the moment they're voting is the most important, and the point in time in which the most investment needs to go into instructions and design.

“ And so that education needs to start right away, but not way before, because I think that's the mistake that keeps happening in a number of places they're sort of educating prior to when a voter is ready to be educated.”

However, all jurisdictions are required by federal law to provide Accessible Voting Units (AVUs) to disabled voters. These machines provide an interactive electronic screen rather than a paper ballot, and offer the voter multiple means of reading and interacting with the ballot. Although election officials typically reported high success and satisfaction rates with AVUs, some expressed concerns about the difficulty of upgrading the systems for RCV elections. The machines are designed for single-choice ballots, and some officials have expressed concerns towards the manufacturers for their slow adaptation to other ballot models.

4.3.3 Administrators - Challenges Relating to Mail-only RCV Elections

Minnesota saw a small uptick in spoiled ballots after the implementation of RCV, although it's unclear whether the two are related. In Cambridge, ballot spoilage is noticeably higher in RCV elections than non-RCV elections, although this may be a factor of that jurisdiction's crowded ballot design (*see* section 4.2.1). Most other administrators do not consider RCV itself to be a major contributor to spoiled ballots. Nonetheless, most considered the ability to quickly identify and resolve ballot issues as a critical component of successful RCV administration.

As such, administrators and officials from in-person RCV jurisdictions were generally concerned about how RCV would interplay with Washington’s all-mail elections. Losing the ability to offer in-person assistance was considered problematic by a plurality of those interviewed. Voter assistance phone numbers and email addresses were discussed as viable alternatives, but most agreed that in-person assistance was preferred.

As discussed above, federal law requires use of Accessible Voting Units , and administrators rely on these machines to ensure equal ballot access for disabled individuals. Almost every election official interviewed expressed concern that these machines would be underutilized in an all-mail election.

In accordance with requirements of Federal and State law, King County does currently offer in-person voting options including AVUs at six offsite locations. However, these alternative voting methods are poorly advertised and rarely utilized.⁵² Paradoxically, although voting by mail increases access for many physically disabled voters, it also infringes on access for voters with some other disabilities, particularly those who have difficulty reading or filling out paper ballots. Unlike an in-person election where AVUs and election workers are readily available at thousands of locations, access to assistance is limited in states like Washington. Fewer in-person voting centers means longer distances to travel and limited hours of access.

King County ran a mobile voting pilot program in 2024 that set up voting booths and AVUs in libraries. Interviewed King County election officials consider this program to have been a success, but the County seemingly has no plans to expand in-person options in the lead-up to RCV implementation.⁵³ As an alternative, all mail-in ballots are printed with a phone number that voters can call for assistance.

4.4 Advocate Interviewees

The introduction of RCV in Seattle requires not only procedural changes but also a renewed investment in voter education – particularly for communities historically excluded from political participation. Many participants highlighted the importance of early, multi-modal outreach that centers the needs of voters with I/DD. The shift from selecting one candidate to ranking several introduces an additional cognitive step that can be difficult to navigate without support. Advocates emphasized that without clear, inclusive messaging and materials, many voters may choose not to participate at all, making existing turnout disparities worse.

⁵² See section 4.2.2. Few voters seem to know where their nearest voting center is.

⁵³ According to members of King County’s board of Election’s Advisory Committee on the Implementation of Ranked Choice Voting, there are no current plans to expand in-person voting access.

Our participants generally described current voter education materials as disorganized and often hard to access. Materials frequently rely on dense, legalistic language, and tend to be distributed primarily through mail or websites – formats that may not reach voters with I/DD:

“There’s words that are on ballots that people don’t know. Now, that’s not necessarily an I/DD concern directly, but this past election we had judge races, and state law says that the incumbent has the word ‘incumbent’ printed next to them, and once or twice a day when I’m doing early voting, somebody will ask, ‘What? What does this mean? What is this word?’”

While some efforts have been made to use more accessible formats – such as videos or infographics – these resources are not always available in plain language or disseminated through trusted community networks. Participants stressed that accessibility should not be treated as an afterthought but as a foundational component of civic inclusion.

4.4.1 Advocates - Expected Barriers to Voting Upon RCV Implementation

A prominent voting rights lawyer from California who has worked as a disability rights advocate for multiple decades expressed considerable concern about the challenges RCV poses to I/DD voters. According to him, San Francisco’s all-mail election scheme has already created accessibility issues, particularly for voters with “print disabilities,” a subcategory of disabilities which make reading printed words difficult or impossible. Without in-person voting assistance, many print-disabled voters in the Bay Area have been unable to vote without seeking out poorly-advertised and often under-equipped voting centers.

His expectation is that the added complexity of an RCV ballot will only exacerbate these issues. What’s more, educational materials may only minimally mitigate this problem, as their accessibility faces the same problems as the ballots themselves.

Interviewees consistently raised the concern that voter guides, ballots, and educational materials lack plain language.. While the ranking concept of RCV may seem intuitive to some, the actual instructions and ballot layout can create confusion when not paired with clear, simplified explanations. Several participants emphasized that plain language is not just a best practice for voters with I/DD, but a broadly inclusive approach that benefits voters across educational backgrounds and language proficiencies.

Advocates described how even highly capable individuals may feel intimidated or disengaged when presented with complex voting materials. Many noted that materials should be tested to

meet a fifth- to eighth-grade reading level, with clearly defined terms, visual supports, and consistent formatting. Suggestions for improvement included step-by-step ranking instructions, bulleted summaries of key concepts, and the use of alternative media such as video walkthroughs and audio recordings. Overall, the findings point to the need for a standardized plain language framework that can guide all aspects of voter communication, from early education campaigns to the ballots themselves.

4.4.2 Advocates - Needs of Voters in the I/DD Community

Interviewees emphasized that building strong community partnerships is essential for reaching voters with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and ensuring they have access to information about RCV. While official election materials play a central role, advocates and election staff alike noted that these resources are most effective when reinforced by trusted messengers within disability communities. Individuals are more likely to engage with and understand voting information when it is shared by familiar sources, such as care providers, peer mentors, or local disability organizations that understand their communication needs and lived experiences.

Participants described several ways that community-based organizations (CBOs) can play a key role in advancing voter education for the I/DD community. In-person workshops, accessible events, and peer-led sessions were cited as particularly effective strategies. Some noted that community spaces such as supported housing, day programs, and disability resource centers offer important points of contact where voting information can be shared and reinforced in a more personalized and interactive way. These environments are often better suited to the pacing and support needs of voters with cognitive disabilities, especially when compared to dense printed guides or digital-only outreach.

One interviewee emphasized that while training and education efforts have value, they are not enough on their own to overcome the barriers I/DD voters face. He stressed the importance of widely available in-person voting options, particularly sites equipped with accessible voting units (AVUs) and staff who are trained to support voters with disabilities. According to him, on-site assistance—including the ability to quickly cure spoiled ballots—is a crucial part of ensuring meaningful access for voters who may otherwise struggle with the complexity of the RCV system or the isolation of mail-in voting. This perspective aligns with broader feedback from participants who expressed concern that support systems for I/DD voters are too often reactive or inconsistent across jurisdictions.

Some outreach is currently facilitated through advisory committees and public institutions. In accordance with State law, King County has a permanent Disability Advisory Committee that works to ensure elections are accessible to voters with disabilities. The County has also created a

Ranked Choice Voting Advisory Committee to provide specific advice on RCV implementation which includes disabled voter representation.

Nonetheless, several participants emphasized the need for deeper, more consistent partnerships between the election administration and CBOs. These collaborations should be ongoing, not one-time consultations, and should include co-creation of materials, joint training, and funding for community-led outreach. Participants noted that when election administrators treat accessibility as an afterthought, efforts often fall short of reaching those with the greatest need. Embedding disability community input at every stage of the RCV rollout—design, education, implementation, and evaluation—will be key to fostering long-term inclusion.

Ultimately, community engagement is about more than information dissemination; it is about trust and relationship-building. Participants recommended regular touchpoints between election officials and disability organizations to ensure that feedback loops are maintained and emerging concerns are addressed early. Inclusive outreach for RCV should be sustained across election cycles and designed to build civic infrastructure that lasts beyond a single reform.

TABLE 3: Recurring Topics Brought Up by Interviewees

Category	Challenge
General Voting Challenges Faced by Members of the I/DD Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of direct <i>in-person</i> assistance when voting by mail. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Higher potential for spoiled ballots or unresolved issues when response is delayed. ○ Lack of faith in the efficacy of the phone numbers provided on ballots. ● Lack of educational or voting assistance materials written in <i>plain language</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Voter guides, ballots, and educational materials are rarely written in simple and accessible terms. ● Unavailability of Accessible Voting Units (AVUs), or lack of knowledge about how to access AVUs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In-person voting options are few and far between. ○ King County does not adequately advertise the availability or location of AVU's.. ● Print/bubble size too small. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-optimal text/page color. ● General privacy concerns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-partisanship of guardians or assistants. ○ Inability to fill out and cast ballots in a completely private manner.
Challenges Specific to the Implementation of RCV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complexity or print density of ballot design. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RCV ballots may require more densely packed ballot grids which are more difficult to fill out. ● Lack of avenues for education about RCV and its upcoming implementation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Skepticism about King County's ability to effectively communicate these changes.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Overview of Recommendations

Although we have not observed any large issues with RCV implementation for voters with I/DD in our evidence, we have created a set of recommendations to mitigate any possible problems that may arise in King County. These recommendations are designed for DRW and other advocates for equitable RCV implementation to take proactive action against these potential barriers to voter participation.

We have grouped our recommendations into the following general categories:

- **Educational:** tools and actions for increasing awareness for the barriers regarding voters with I/DD and RCV, and how to overcome those barriers through informational campaigns. These are tools that advocates can directly apply within their purview and among constituents.
 - The overarching theme of this category is to help define readily available tools that could help support the implementation of RCV. Many interview respondents across all groups noted that any educational materials and tools should be relayed in plain language.
 - Educational materials can include the following:
 - Training and workshops from non-partisan groups working with voters with I/DD
 - Training and workshops from non-partisan groups aimed towards guardians/assistants who help voters with I/DD fill out their ballot
 - Door-to-door outreach that incorporates educational materials accessible to voters with I/DD
 - Voter guides prepared with the I/DD community in mind
 - Online/social media and marketing campaigns geared towards voters with I/DD
- **Structural:** necessary relating to legal compliance, legislation, and systematic changes to decrease barriers to voting with RCV for people with I/DD. These recommendations are designed to improve the underlying structure of the voting system, but may not be the direct impact of advocate services.

In accordance with our findings, we make recommendations detailed in the following tables:

5.2 Structural Recommendations

Structural Recommendations	Rationale	Feasibility
<p>Advocate for ballots to be written and reviewed in plain language</p>	<p>In addition to expanding education, many interviewees advocated for keeping ballots in plain language (maximum level of vocabulary understandable to a fifth/sixth grader) so that the information is easier to comprehend. Advocates expressed that if the process is easier for the general public, it will likely be easier for voters with I/DD as well.</p>	<p>Pros: Understandable to both voters with I/DD and the general public.</p> <p>Cons: Additional legwork to identify sources for information on plain language, and standards for reviewing materials to ensure language is clear and concise.</p>
<p>Advocate for the order of ballot questions to be prioritized with intent</p>	<p>It is often easier for I/DD voters to make decisions at the beginning rather than further down the ballot due to fatigue from the decision-making process. Important ballot questions should be prioritized at the beginning so that in cases of increased fatigue, the counted ballots are less likely to be spoiled. However, which ballot questions are more “important” is context-dependent.</p>	<p>Pros: Decreases the fatigue and allows voters to make choices with capacity</p> <p>Cons: There may be legal barriers surrounding how questions are organized, and which questions should be prioritized will depend on jurisdictions and parties. There may be a need to implement a committee for equitable selection.</p>

<p>Advocate for I/DD voter feedback to be communicated to online system administrators</p>	<p>Online voter system designs do not often consider the needs of people with I/DD due to the lack of feedback loops. Integrating feedback from those in the I/DD community may make the interface design more comprehensible and accessible, which may increase participation and voting accuracy and decrease the number of spoiled ballots.</p>	<p>Pros: Easier system for online voting may increase the number of voter base who have difficulty accessing physical voting centers.</p> <p>Cons: Additional research and collaboration between online system vendors, voting centers, and staff to implement the system</p>
<p>Advocate for election administrators to simplify the process of submitting an online ballot</p>	<p>The current accessible ballot allows the voter to open their ballot online to increase font size and make other adjustments. However, there are many steps in this process. The voter specifically has to request this format, have the link sent to them, and have the ballot printed after completing it online. The physical ballot needs to be sent to the voting center, and administrators transcribe it as a physical copy to count as an official ballot. Voters will not utilize this system if they do not know about this system, and there will be hesitancy using online ballots if there are too many steps needed to complete the voting process.</p>	<p>Pros: Expanded methods and accessibility may increase voter turn out.</p> <p>Cons: The current system in place needs to be modified and adjusted for different methods to be officially counted.</p>

<p>Advocate for voting centers to be strategically placed with improved access</p>	<p>The voters we interviewed indicated that if there were more voting centers in the vicinity and improved ease of access, they would be more inclined to vote. However, as one advocate mentioned, if the voting experience is improved for everyone, it may likely benefit others with disabilities as well. This requires increased capacity and staff.</p>	<p>Pros: Possible increase in voter turnout</p> <p>Cons: Cost of space and administrative work to place new centers may be a large burden.</p>
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5.3 Educational Recommendations

Educational Recommendations	Rationale	Feasibility
<p>Advocates should hold informational workshops about the change in the system designed specifically for members of the I/DD community</p>	<p>Advocates can plan and deliver campaigns that include how to find in-person voting centers to support the implementation of RCV. As per our interviews, there is a significant gap in knowledge about voting procedures in general for I/DD voters (which may be true of the general population as well), which can be mitigated through informational campaigns.</p>	<p>Pros: advocates investing in this process will grow information accessibility for people with I/DD. Trusted community groups are more likely to provide information that gets received. Doing deep relational work increases retention in gaining access to information.</p> <p>Cons: this will take time and resources. Additionally, because this education has to be timed out in order to</p>

Advocates should offer door-to-door assistance with information on voting via RCV for people in the I/DD community		make the greatest impact, advocates will have to strategize around how they want to use their already scarce resources.
Advocates should host in-person and online workshops for those interested in learning how to vote via RCV		Costs: cost of labor, resources for materials, time for relationship building and trust building.
Advocates should interface with election officials as an in-between for voters with I/DD and bureaucrats seeking information pertaining to this community	Advocates can narrow the gap between voters with I/DD and election officials and support their process in gaining access to such voters for surveys, community conversations, and other community engagement efforts. This reduces the burden on voters with I/DD to seek information themselves.	Pros: administrators would be carrying out their value of accessibility to increase access to information.
Advocates should work closely with impacted voters to ensure they receive the information necessary to vote		Cons: this will take time and resources, as well as introduce a strategic change in outreach, potentially. For under-resourced administrators, this might feel like an administrative burden.
Advocates should engage directly with community and advocacy organizations to facilitate outreach events for the I/DD community		Cost: cost of labor, time, materials

<p>Advocates should reach out to guardians and existing resource organizations for guardians to provide support for voters with I/DD</p>	<p>By building a coalition with guardians and existing resource groups for guardians, advocates can strengthen the pipeline of information for guardians during RCV implementation. This would both mitigate confusion and also create a foundation for support if/when concerns about voter privacy arise. Guardians – professional, lay, and public – all receive some training on their duties through the Administrative Office of Courts and local courts. Training on RCV and accommodation for voting and how to assist without taking over the process should be included in guardianship training.</p>	<p>Pros: being able to assist someone with I/DD while giving as much privacy as possible will help create security around voting.</p> <p>Cons: it puts the burden on the individual as opposed to the system to acquire the information that they need.</p> <p>Cost: personal cost of time, labor</p>
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APPENDIX A - Center for Civic Design Guidance on RCV Ballot Creation

Primary & Special Absentee Runoff Ballot
Fulton County, Georgia Primary and Runoff Election Tuesday, March 3, 2020 **1/1**

Instructions for voting

In the **first step**, you will vote as you normally would.
In the **second step**, you will vote in case Atlanta has a second election (this is called a runoff and is explained below).

This ballot allows you to make a choice in case that second election occurs. Doing so means **you won't have to request another overseas ballot.**

How to vote
First, vote for the candidate you want to win.
Then, rank the candidates in order of your choice. In case a runoff occurs, **you may rank as many or as few candidates as you wish.**

Fill in the oval...

- In the 1st column for your first 1st choice.
- In the 2nd column for your 2nd choice.
- In the 3rd column for your 3rd choice.
- Continue until you have made all your choices.

Fill in the oval completely.

No more than 1 oval in a column.

No more than 1 oval for a candidate.

President

Step 1: Vote for your choice in this election (or in the primary election)
Mark no more than 1 oval in each column.

Step 2: Rank your additional choices in case there is a runoff
In Georgia, a candidate has to win a 50% majority of votes to win. If no candidate reaches that percentage, Georgia holds another election called a **runoff**. In this case, the runoff is between the two top vote-getters in the first election.
Below, you have the chance to rank who you would vote for if a runoff occurs.

First choice	Second choice	Third choice	Fourth choice	Fifth choice	Sixth choice
1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
<input type="radio"/> Frederick Sharp	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> Luis Garcia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> Alex Wallace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> Eric Savoy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> Barbara Williams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> Lillian Cohen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Explain that the ballot includes 2 elections.

Explains that the design of these ballots helps UOCAVA voters save time and effort.


Instructions that explain how to correctly mark a RCV ballot.

A plain language definition of what a runoff is.

Thick vertical rule clearly divides the first choice and additional rankings in case of a runoff.

APPENDIX B - Densely-Packed Cambridge RCV Ballot with 22 Candidate Options

**CANDIDATES FOR
CITY COUNCIL**
for Term of Two Years
SPECIMEN BALLOT



Cambridge
November 5, 2019

[Signature]
Election Commissioners

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

Mark your choices by completely filling in the numbered ovals like this using a black pen.

- Fill in the number one next to your first choice.
- Fill in the number two next to your second choice.
- Fill in the number three next to your third choice, and so on.
- You may fill in as many choices as you please.
- Fill in no more than one oval per candidate.
- Fill in no more than one oval per column.

To Vote for a write-in candidate:

- Fill in a numbered oval next to the name you have written, showing your choice as a number for a candidate.
- Record write-ins from the top line down.


If you spoil this ballot, return it for cancellation to the election officer in charge of the ballots and get another from such officer.

Only one vote per candidate. Only one vote per column. DO NOT USE RED TO MARK BALLOT

BURKA AKIBA, 243 Welden Street																							
BURHAN AZEEM, 81 Sidney Street																							
DENNIS J. CARLONE, 9 Washington Avenue	Candidate for City Council																						
CHARLES J. FRANKLIN, 162 Hampshire Street																							
CRAIG A. KELLEY, 6 Saint Gerard Terrace	Candidate for City Council																						
DEREK ANDREW KOPON, 1 Wright Street																							
ILAN LEVY, 148 Spring Street																							
ALANNA M. MALLON, 3 Maple Avenue	Candidate for City Council																						
MARC C. MCDOVERN, 17 Pleasant Street	Candidate for City Council																						
JEFFERY McNARY, 116 Norfolk Street																							
RIBA MEDNICK, 28 Maple Avenue																							
GREGG J. MOREE, 26 Fairfield Street																							
ADRIANE MUGRAVE, 48 Haskell Street																							
PATRICIA M. NOLAN, 184 Huron Avenue																							
JOHN PITKIN, 18 Fayette Street																							
SUMBUL SIDDIQUI, 283 Sidney Street	Candidate for City Council																						
E. DENISE SIMMONS, 188 Harvard Street	Candidate for City Council																						
BEN SIMON, 67 Bishop Allen Drive																							
JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER, 19 Tremont Bridge Street																							
TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY, JR., 88 6th Street	Candidate for City Council																						
NICOLA A. WILLIAMS, 8 Brewer Street																							
QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN, 233 Cardinal Madison Avenue	Candidate for City Council																						
WRITE-IN																							
WRITE-IN																							
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By law, candidates' names are rotated on ballots at polls, and may appear in a different order than on this Specimen ballot.

APPENDIX C - Minneapolis RCV Ballot

Official Ballot City General Election Ballot City of Minneapolis November 2, 2021			Judge _____ Judge _____		
Ranked Choice Voting Instructions to the Voters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rank up to 3 different candidates for each office. Vote from left to right in each office in order of your preference. To vote, completely fill in the oval(s) next to your choice(s) like this:  					
City Offices					
Mayor					
Rank your first, second and third choice candidates in the columns below. One to be elected.					
1	1st Choice Select One	2	2nd Choice, if any Must be DIFFERENT from your 1st choice. Select One	3	3rd Choice, if any Must be DIFFERENT from your 1st and 2nd choices. Select One
<input type="radio"/>	Paul E. Johnson <u>Equity in Motion</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Paul E. Johnson <u>Equity in Motion</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Paul E. Johnson <u>Equity in Motion</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Doug Nelson <u>Socialist Workers Party</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Doug Nelson <u>Socialist Workers Party</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Doug Nelson <u>Socialist Workers Party</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Sheila Nezhad <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Sheila Nezhad <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Sheila Nezhad <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>
<input type="radio"/>	AJ Awed <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	AJ Awed <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	AJ Awed <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Nate "Honey Badger" Atkins <u>Libertarian Party</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Nate "Honey Badger" Atkins <u>Libertarian Party</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Nate "Honey Badger" Atkins <u>Libertarian Party</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Christopher W David <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Christopher W David <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Christopher W David <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Mike Winter <u>Independence-Alliance</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Mike Winter <u>Independence-Alliance</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Mike Winter <u>Independence-Alliance</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Jacob Frey <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Jacob Frey <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Jacob Frey <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Kevin "No Body" Ward <u>Independent</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Kevin "No Body" Ward <u>Independent</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Kevin "No Body" Ward <u>Independent</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Clint Conner <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Clint Conner <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Clint Conner <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Mark Globus <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Mark Globus <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Mark Globus <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Perry, Jerrell <u>For The People</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Perry, Jerrell <u>For The People</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Perry, Jerrell <u>For The People</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Marcus Harcus <u>Grassroots-Legalize Cannabis</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Marcus Harcus <u>Grassroots-Legalize Cannabis</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Marcus Harcus <u>Grassroots-Legalize Cannabis</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Kate Knuth <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Kate Knuth <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Kate Knuth <u>Democratic-Farmer-Labor</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Bob "Again" Carney Jr <u>Republican</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Bob "Again" Carney Jr <u>Republican</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Bob "Again" Carney Jr <u>Republican</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Laverne Turner <u>Republican</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Laverne Turner <u>Republican</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Laverne Turner <u>Republican</u>
<input type="radio"/>	Troy Benjegerdes <u>Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Troy Benjegerdes <u>Farmer-Labor</u>	<input type="radio"/>	Troy Benjegerdes <u>Farmer-Labor</u>
<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____
	write-in, if any		write-in, if any		write-in, if any