FAIRVOTE

RANKED CHOICE VOTING FINDS SUCCESS IN UTAH IN 2021

Voters in twenty Utah cities used ranked choice voting (RCV) for their local elections in 2021 as part of the state's RCV municipal pilot program. An additional three cities opted in to the pilot program but did not have enough declared candidates to need ranked ballots.

Ranked choice ballots elected mayors and city councilors with broad support from the electorate, voters overwhelmingly chose to use the ranked ballot to express multiple preferences, voters reported that they liked using RCV, election integrity was upheld as results were confirmed in a recount, and state legislators have continued to express support for the program.
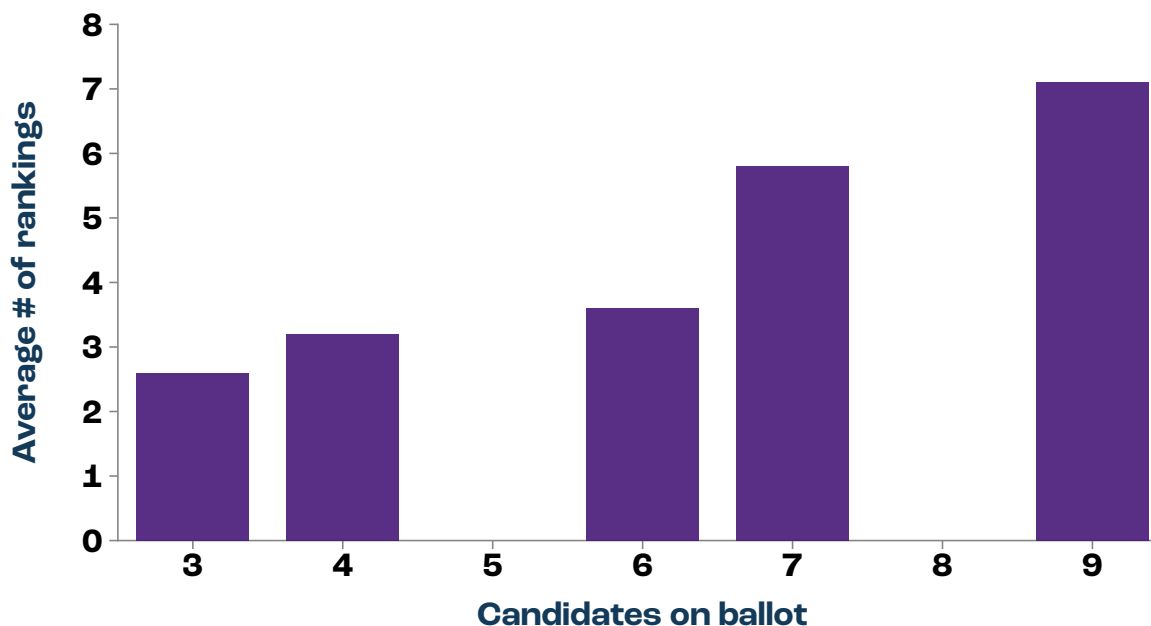
▶ RANKED CHOICE VOTING CITIES SAVED TAXPAYER MONEY

By eliminating non-partisan primaries, cities saved the cost of holding an extra election. For example, the six RCV cities in Utah County saved $140,000, or about $2 per voter. With the costs of elections in Utah likely to rise over time, that savings will likely keep growing.

▶ VOTERS ENTHUSIASTICALLY USED BALLOT RANKINGS

88% of Utah voters ranked multiple candidates on their ballots as shown in full ranked ballot data provided by Utah County, including 93% of voters in Lehi and 92% in second-time-RCV-city Vineyard. The number of rankings used increased in elections with more candidates on the ballot.

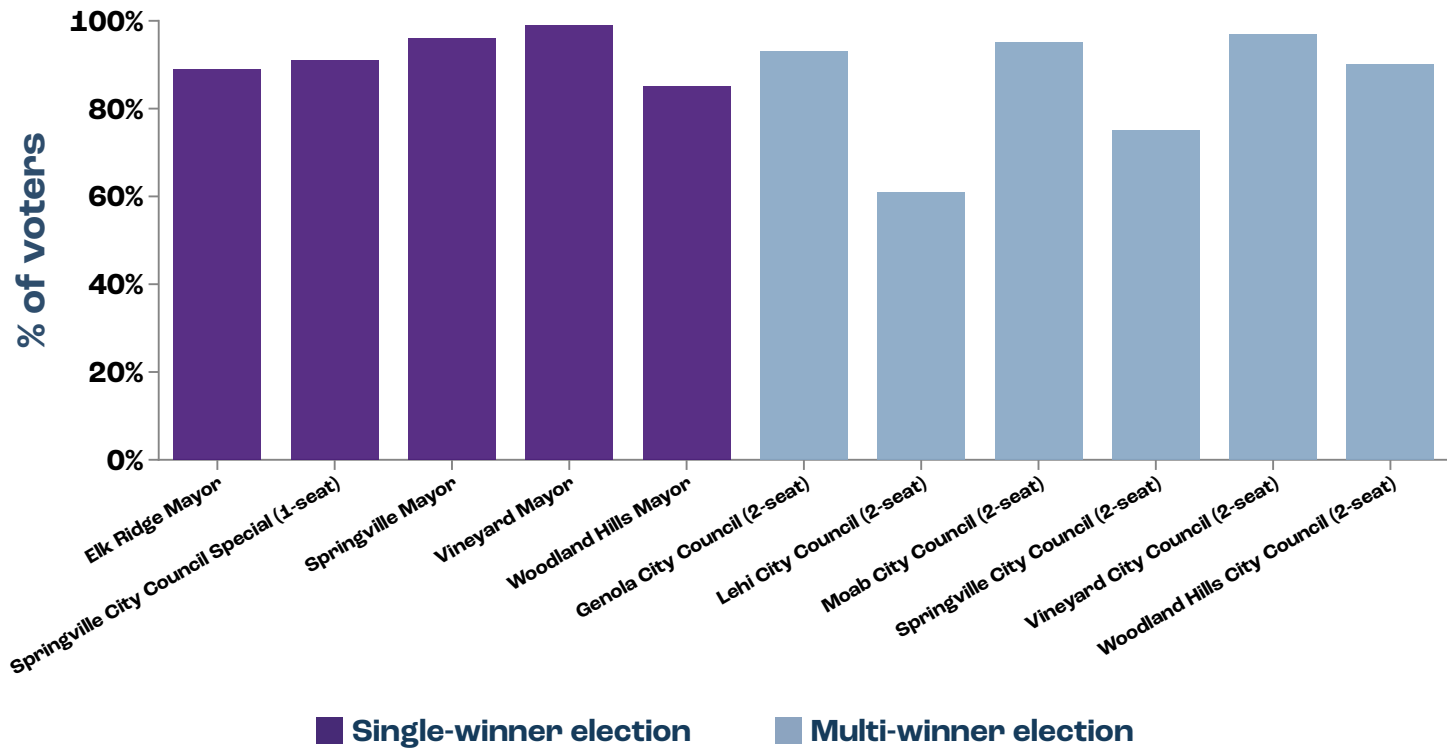**VOTERS USE MORE RANKINGS IN CROWDED RACES**

▶ ELECTION WINNERS EARNED BROAD CONSENSUS SUPPORT

Candidates had reasons to connect with more people, and 9 out of 10 voters ranked the winner(s) in their top 3 choices.

When an overwhelming majority of voters help elect a winner, those voters have more stake in the outcome, leading to increased citizen engagement and good governance.

PERCENT OF VOTERS WHO RANKED A WINNER IN THEIR TOP 3 CHOICES

■ Single-winner election   ■ Multi-winner election

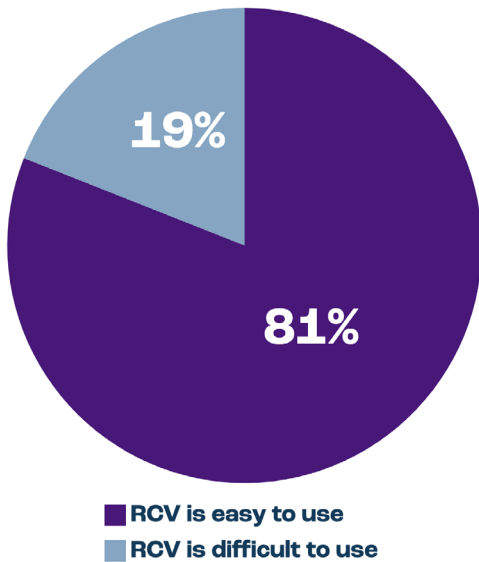## ▶ VOTERS EARNED A BREAK DURING "NO PRIMARY DAY"

Cities who did not opt in to the RCV municipal pilot program held nonpartisan primary elections in August. The RCV cities instead held "No Primary Day" to celebrate the voter freedom and taxpayer savings achieved by eliminating an unnecessary election.

Primary turnout is roughly 30% lower than general election turnout in Utah cities. By eliminating primaries, the RCV cities saved their decision-making until November when turnout was highest and RCV selected the winners with the deepest and broadest support.
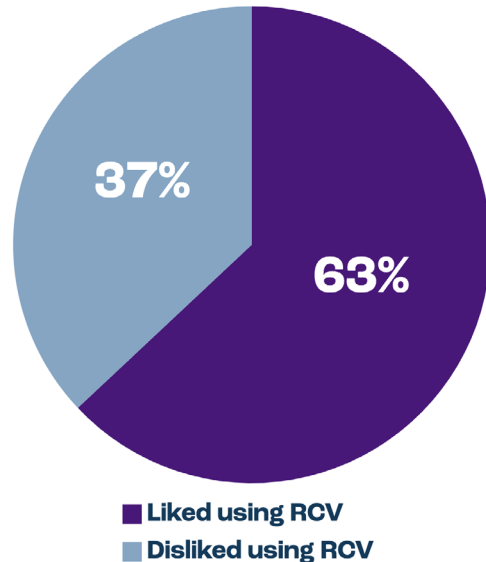
▶ VOTERS LIKED USING RCV

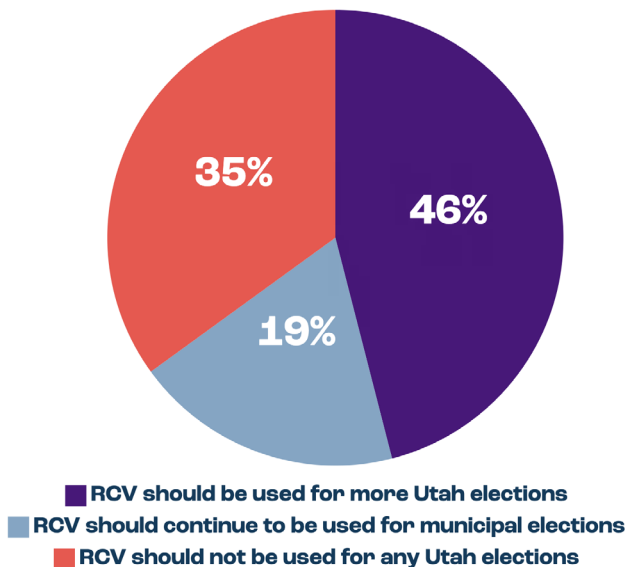Y2 Analytics conducted a rigorous scientific exit poll to assess voters' opinions about their first use of RCV.
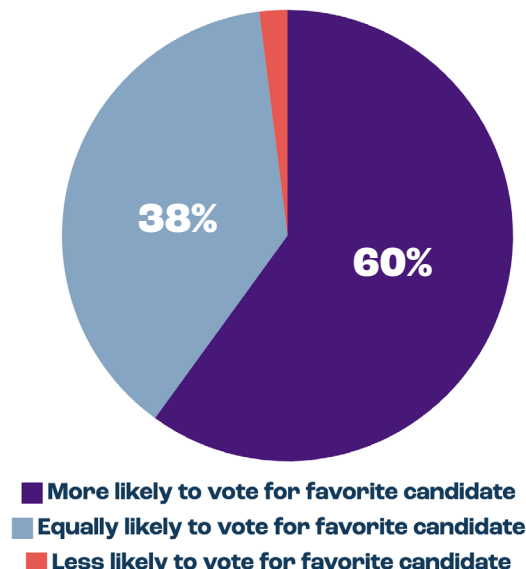
8 out of 10 voters said RCV is easy to use.

19%

81%

■ RCV is easy to use
■ RCV is difficult to use

63% of voters liked using an RCV ballot. A majority supported RCV in every city polled, including a majority of both Republicans and Democrats.

37%

63%

■ Liked using RCV
■ Disliked using RCV

Two-thirds of voters want to keep RCV at its current level or expand it to more elections.

35%

46%

19%

■ RCV should be used for more Utah elections
■ RCV should continue to be used for municipal elections
■ RCV should not be used for any Utah elections

60% of RCV voters are more likely to vote for their preferred candidate (instead of strategically voting); 38% unchanged; 2% less likely.

38%

60%

■ More likely to vote for favorite candidate
■ Equally likely to vote for favorite candidate
■ Less likely to vote for favorite candidate

Voters in RCV and non-RCV races are both confident that their processes produced fair election outcomes.

Non-RCV voters	**90%**	**10%**
RCV voters	**87%**	**13%**

■ **Confident** ■ **Not confident**

▶ STATE LEGISLATORS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT RCV

The Utah state legislature has led the country on election reform. After a Republican-led effort first created the RCV municipal pilot program in 2019 and two cities opted in, legislators have twice modified or expanded the program. These changes, led by Republican administrative rules committee chair Senator Curt Bramble, have made it easier for cities to opt in and helped facilitate smooth election administration. The number of cities using the program grew from two cities in 2019 to twenty-three cities in 2021.

By continuing to support and improve the pilot program, legislators demonstrate their continued commitment to improving elections for Utah's voters.