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National Conference  
San Francisco, CA**

**2014 Professional Practices Program  
Developing a Voter Outreach  
and Education Plan for  
Municipal Voters**

**City of Minneapolis, Minnesota**

**Submitted by:**

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# City of Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services

## Developing a Voter Outreach & Education Plan for Municipal Voters

November 2013 marked the second time Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) was used for a municipal election in the City of Minneapolis. With four years since its initial appearance, and a growing population including many first-time voters, making sure voters knew what to expect on Election Day was essential.

Two additional factors further increased the urgency behind developing an effective voter outreach and education plan. First, the popular incumbent mayor declined to stand for reelection, resulting in a number of competitive races on the ballot; and second, demographic shifts in the city meant there were more residents from a variety of different backgrounds, including many who spoke something other than English as a primary language.

### MAKING A PLAN

In the first quarter of 2013, planning began in earnest to create a plan essentially from scratch. More than a decade of budget cuts has winnowed the division’s permanent staffing model and left a focus on the most basic essential functions for election administration. Recognizing the need to include education and outreach in that model again somehow, a point person from the staff of the Office of the City Clerk, of which the Elections Division is a part, was assigned to manage voter outreach and education for this election as a project. The planning process began by examining the work done by an outside contractor hired in 2009 to conduct voter education as well as researching best practices nationally and in other similar efforts in the city, such as the 2010 Census Complete Count Committee. From that base of preparation, several primary directions for the work became apparent.

- **Identifying key partners** – including internal partners within the city and external organizations.
- **Developing consistent messaging** - **YOUR CITY. YOUR VOTE.** identity and a consistent focus.
- **Determining outreach methods** –strategies to reach a range of residents across the City.
- **Creating education tools** – an array of tools to be used and shared in a variety of education efforts.

### IMPLEMENTATION

#### 1. Identifying key partners

A cross-departmental team of internal partners from the City was assembled, bringing to the table expertise in communications, community outreach, technology, and information sharing. Cultivating outside partners with the interest and ability to play a role in education and outreach efforts was also critical to expanding the reach of the messaging being developed.

#### 2. Developing consistent messaging

The graphic designer from the City’s Communications Department designed a distinctive visual identity for incorporation in all aspects of the campaign. Clear education messages were developed around ensuring every Minneapolis resident would know three things before Election Day:

1. When, what, & where of the 2013 election:  
There is a municipal election on Nov. 5 in Minneapolis.
2. How to vote:  
How to register, where to go, what to do, & especially how to fill out an RCV ballot.
3. Why voting matters in local elections:  
Every vote counts, both on Election Day & for the next four years in running the City.

### 3. Determining outreach methods

This included a range of strategies to reach residents, particularly in historically underserved communities. Creating opportunities for direct contacts was a particular focus, and was facilitated through expanding external partnerships as much as possible to expand that reach. Tactics included:

- A. Voter Ambassador Program – enlisting both resident volunteers and partner organizations to receive training and resources to talk with friends, neighbors, and spheres of influence.
- B. Educational sessions – a small number were held at City Hall and public libraries, most occurred with organizational partners at their sites to share information with clients or employees.
- C. Social media – Elections & Voter Services established its own Twitter and Facebook accounts, as well as utilizing the City’s official social media channels to share education materials and messages, and promote further sharing by residents with their own networks.
- D. Community events and festivals – tabling and canvassing with the help of both ambassadors and organizational partners with more volunteers like FairVote Minnesota.
- E. Mock elections – held in four high schools in the four geographic quadrants of the city and at City Hall to demonstrate new equipment and share information about RCV.
- F. Vote Minneapolis Activity books - distributed in public libraries and elementary schools.
- G. High school classroom visits – presentations sharing how RCV works, the role of City government, and opportunities for students to serve as election judges.
- H. College student engagement – student interns conducted focused outreach on university campuses through student groups.
- I. Advertising – utilized three major venues at no cost: cards placed on the interior of public buses with routes through the city; messages on digital billboards during donated time; 30-second public service announcement produced to air during donated airtime on the cable system.
- J. Voter information guide – mailing to every household in the city, including a sample ballot.

### 4. Creating education tools

Technology-based tools were a major focus. Most significantly, this included a complete redesign of the City’s elections website, [vote.minneapolismn.gov](http://vote.minneapolismn.gov), to give it a new visual identity consistent with the other materials being created while completely rethinking its design. The site navigation was designed to be as intuitive as possible, arranging content by likely audiences. Two tools were incorporated into every page on the site: a toolkit of quick links to the resources voters use most, and a “See how RCV works” promo “ad” that linked to the tools on the site dedicated to explaining RCV.

Two of those tools were heavily relied on to help explain RCV both on the website and in one-on-one interactions. First was a video using easy-to-follow yet engaging graphics to explain how RCV works when casting a ballot and counting those votes. In addition to sharing on the website, the City’s YouTube channel, and through social media, DVDs were distributed to organizational partners. The second tool was an interactive ballot that allowed residents to rank up to three choices, as they would be doing on Election Day, and then showing how votes would be allocated. The interactive ballot allowed a practice voter to rank 1, 2, or 3 candidates of their choice, but would not allow repeat choices or skipped rankings, the two most common voter errors in RCV. A hard copy handout of the interactive ballot demonstration of how votes are tabulated was also developed for additional distribution.

A full array of print materials was also developed. All materials:

- Were translated into at least three and up to six languages;
- Were posted on the website for easy download and on demand printing;
- Included prominent references to the website to reinforce its centrality as a resource for voters.
- Had printed copies made available to ambassadors and partners for pick up to ensure consistent messaging was being shared throughout the community.

# New Elections Website

## [vote.minneapolumn.gov](http://vote.minneapolumn.gov)

See How it Works – found here and in the left side navigation throughout the site & links directly to the RCV video & interactive ballot

**YourVote. Guide**

Election Day: Nov. 5, 2013

- ★ Register to Vote
- ★ Where to Vote
- ★ Sample Ballot
- ★ Absentee Voting/ Vote by Mail
- ★ Voter Assistance
- ★ Elections Updates Sign-up

View Important Election Dates

MINNEAPOLIS YourCity. YourVote.

MINNEAPOLIS Election Day: November 5, 2013

Home News Events Election Updates Sign-up Translate

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) Voters Candidates Election Judges Volunteers Students Maps & Results

What is Ranked Choice Voting?  
RCV: EASY AS 1-2-3!

Candidate Filing is Open from July 30 - Aug. 13, 2013

RECENT NEWS

UPCOMING EVENTS

YourVote. Guide

Your Vote Guide – found in the right column of every page & includes navigation to key sections of the site most needed by voters; this guide also is what the 311 mobile app accesses

Voters

Voter Registration

Where to Vote

Sample Ballot

MINNEAPOLIS 311 Can Help

YourVote. Guide

Frequently used content for voters can be accessed from the top pull down menu or the Your Vote guide

# Interactive Ballot –

[vote.minneapolisismn.gov/rcv/how-rcv-works](http://vote.minneapolisismn.gov/rcv/how-rcv-works)

- VOTING (RCV)
- How does RCV work?
- What is Ranked Choice Voting?
- Sample Ballot
- RCV History

## See How Ranked Choice Voting Works

Ranked Choice Voting allows you to rank up to three candidates for each municipal office. Use the demonstration ballot below to practice using Ranked Choice Voting, then click "vote" to see how the votes are counted.

Let's say we're electing a city park for mayor. Rank your top three choices in the columns below, by moving from left to right. Your ballot will count for your 2nd choice only if your 1st choice is eliminated, and it will count for your 3rd choice only if your first two choices are eliminated.

NOTE: On Election Day, you'll be filling in ovals on a paper ballot, just like any other election year.

### HERE'S HOW TO RANK YOUR CHOICES ON THE BALLOT:

Mayor Rank your first, second and third choices in the columns below. One to be elected.

1	2	3
Make your first choice in this column	Make your second choice in this column	Make your third choice in this column
1st Choice	2nd Choice, if any. Must be DIFFERENT from your first choice.	3rd Choice, if any. Must be DIFFERENT from your 1st and 2nd choice.
Select one	Select one	Select one
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>THEODORE WIRTH PARK Parks Party</li> <li>MINNEHAHA PARK &amp; FALLS Parks United</li> <li>NORTH MISSISSIPPI PARK Parks Party</li> <li>CHAIN OF LAKES Parks Party</li> <li>DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT Parks Party</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>THEODORE WIRTH PARK Parks Party</li> <li>MINNEHAHA PARK &amp; FALLS Parks United</li> <li>NORTH MISSISSIPPI PARK Parks Party</li> <li>CHAIN OF LAKES Parks Party</li> <li>DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT Parks Party</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>THEODORE WIRTH PARK Parks Party</li> <li>MINNEHAHA PARK &amp; FALLS Parks United</li> <li>NORTH MISSISSIPPI PARK Parks Party</li> <li>CHAIN OF LAKES Parks Party</li> <li>DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT Parks Party</li> </ul>

Once you've selected your top 3 choices press vote:

**Vote**

## Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)

How does RCV work?

What is Ranked Choice Voting?

Sample Ballot

RCV History

Home > Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) >

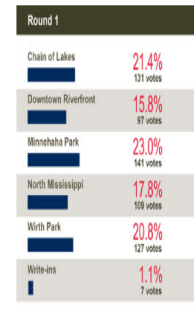
## How Ranked Choice Voting Works

OK, your first choice vote was Theodore Wirth Park

Theodore Wirth Park didn't get enough votes to win in the first round. So read below to see how second and third choices are counted to determine the winner.

### ROUND 1

All 1st choices on the ballots are counted. To win a single-seat race like the mayor's office, a candidate needs to reach a threshold of 50% + 1 of the votes. In this case, no one has enough votes to win after round 1. Because this is a ranked-choice voting election, we move on to another round of counting. In a single-seat race like this, voters whose first choice is defeated have their next choice used in additional rounds of counting until a candidate reaches the threshold needed to win, or until only one candidate remains.



### ROUND 2

In this round, the candidate with the fewest 1st choice votes is defeated. In this case, it is the group of write-in candidates. The votes cast for these candidates as a first choice are transferred to those voters' 2nd choices. Downtown Riverfront is also defeated because, even if it were to receive all the 2nd choice votes transferred from the defeated write-ins, it would still not have enough votes to surpass the next candidate. In other words, Downtown Riverfront has no mathematical possibility of winning. Note that only the defeated candidates' votes are transferred. Votes cast for all other candidates continue to count for those candidates.

So we eliminate two candidates and add second-choice votes to the other four candidates to come up with round 2 totals.



### ROUND 3

# Downloadable Educational Materials at

[vote.minneapolismn.gov/volunteer/education](http://vote.minneapolismn.gov/volunteer/education)

Get out the vote:  
[Voter Ambassadors](#)  
[Voter Ambassador Application](#)  
**Educational Materials**

**Are you registered to vote?**

**GET REGISTERED, GET INFORMED, VOTE!**

Register now or update your information, all online.

**Find Out How**

## Election Educational Materials

If you are interested in sharing information about the 2013 municipal election, the Minneapolis Elections and Voter Services division has developed and compiled a variety of resources that you can use. These resources will help share key educational messages about the election with a variety of audiences across the city.

### BROCHURES, FLIERS & EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

- [Ranked Choice Voting](#) - One page flier - English (pdf)
- [Ranked Choice Voting](#) - One page flier - Español / Spanish (pdf)
- [Ranked Choice Voting](#) - One page flier - Hmoob / Hmong (pdf)
- [Ranked Choice Voting](#) - One page flier - Soomaaliga / Somali (pdf)
- [Ranked Choice Voting](#) - One page flier - Oromiffaa / Oromo (pdf)
- [Ranked Choice Voting](#) - One page flier - Tiếng Việt / Vietnamese (pdf)
- [Ranked Choice Voting](#) - Two page flier - Lao (pdf)

[RCV Easy as 1, 2, 3](#) - Half sheet flier, double sided - English (pdf)

[RCV FAQ](#) - English (pdf)

[Counting a Ranked Choice Voting Election](#) - English two page flier (pdf)

[Ranked Choice Voting Polling Place Instructions](#) - How to complete an RCV ballot - English (pdf)

[Ranked Choice Voting Polling Place Instructions](#) - How to complete an RCV ballot - Hmoob / Hmong (pdf)

[Ranked Choice Voting Polling Place Instructions](#) - How to complete an RCV ballot - Soomaaliga / Somali (pdf)

[Ranked Choice Voting Polling Place Instructions](#) - How to complete an RCV ballot - Español / Spanish (pdf)

[Roadmap to Voting](#) - English (pdf)

[Roadmap to Voting](#) - Hmoob / Hmong (pdf)

[Roadmap to Voting](#) - Soomaaliga / Somali (pdf)

[Roadmap to Voting](#) - Español / Spanish (pdf)

[Voter Information Guide](#) - English double-sided flier - 11 x 17 (pdf)

[Vote Minneapolis Activity Book for Elementary Students](#) - English (pdf)

### MAPS

[Polling Place Map and List](#) - One page flier, double sided - 11x17 - English (pdf)

[Election maps](#) are available on our website. Maps can help voters figure out which ward they are in.

### VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS

You can print your own [voter registration applications](#) from our website. Or, stop by City Hall to pick up a stack of them.

#### Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services

350 South Fifth Street  
City Hall, Room 201 on the second floor  
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1355

[View map \(pdf\)](#)

[Election Day Voter Registration Proofs of ID](#) - Visual guide to acceptable documents - English (pdf)

[Election Day Voter Registration Proofs of ID](#) - Visual guide to acceptable documents - Hmoob / Hmong (pdf)

[Election Day Voter Registration Proofs of ID](#) - Visual guide to acceptable documents - Soomaaliga / Somali (pdf)

[Election Day Voter Registration Proofs of ID](#) - Visual guide to acceptable documents - Español / Spanish (pdf)

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR NON-PROFITS & OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

In addition to the educational fliers and other tools above, these resources will help your organization promote participation in the 2013 municipal election.

Many of these materials and resources are customizable. Contact Anissa Hollingshead for more information via [email](#) or at 612-673-2296.

#### Link to our website

Use one of these banner ads to link to our website. Right click an image and select 'save picture as'.



Next City-wide Election:  
Aug. 12, 2014

★ [Register to Vote](#)

★ [Where to Vote](#)

★ [Sample Ballot](#)

★ [Absentee Voting/Vote by Mail](#)

★ [Voter Assistance](#)

★ [Elections Updates Sign-up](#)

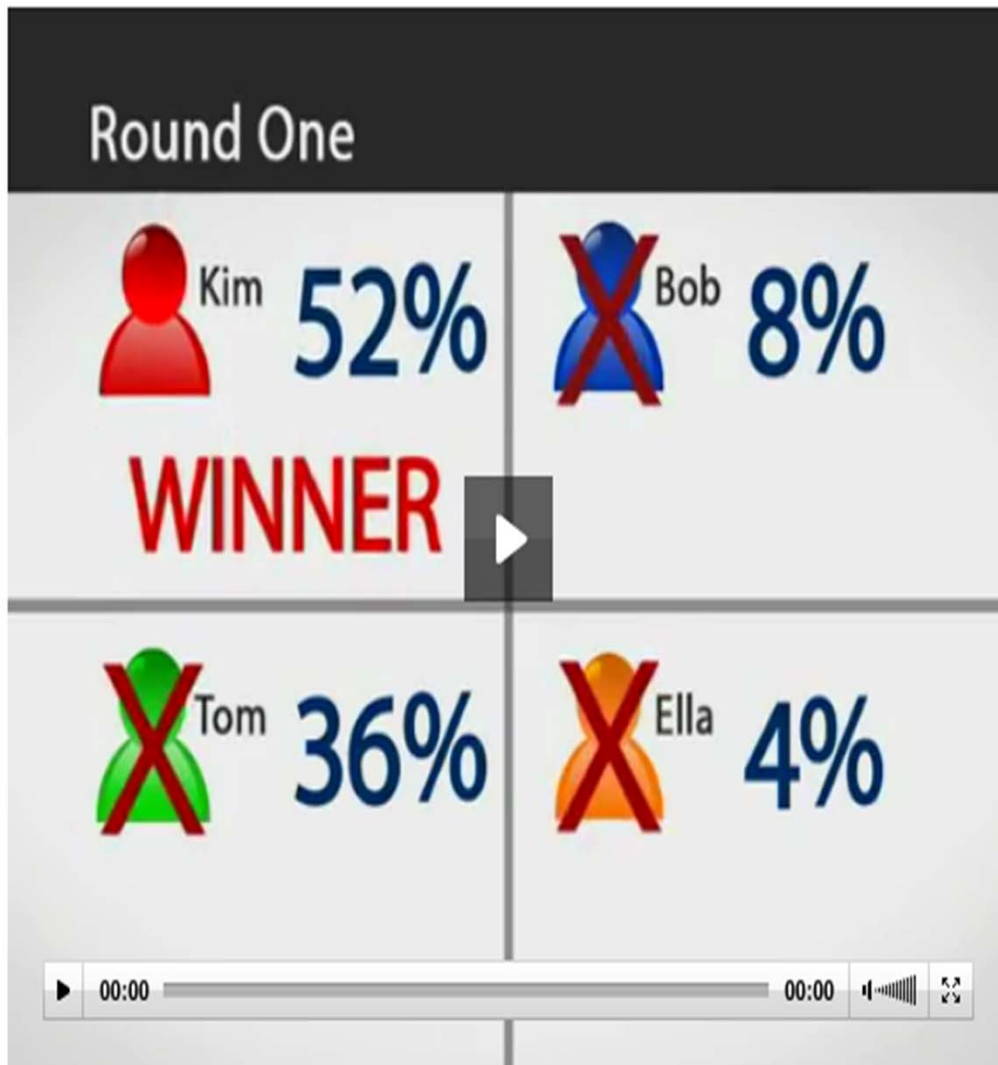
[View Important Election Dates](#)

All education materials and items useful in outreach work were included on the Vote Minneapolis website for easy reference and ready download as needed. Most materials were produced in at least three primary languages other than English, and all available translations were also posted online.

# How RCV Works Video

[vote.minneapolismn.gov/rcv](http://vote.minneapolismn.gov/rcv)

Watch the 2013 Ranked Choice Voting video:



Video in other languages:

[En Español: Votaciones por orden de preferencia en Minneapolis](#)

[Hmoob: Kev Pov Npav Raws Thib](#)

[Soomaaliga: Goobaha-doorashada Codeynta ee Miniyaabolis](#)

*\*DVD included in hard copy submission*

# Vote Minneapolis Activity Book



Activity books were designed, produced, and distributed through public libraries and elementary schools in Minneapolis. Books could also be downloaded and printed from the website at:

<http://vote.minneapolismn.gov/student/k-12>

*\*Printed activity book included in hard copy submission.*