Ranked Choice Voting in New York City
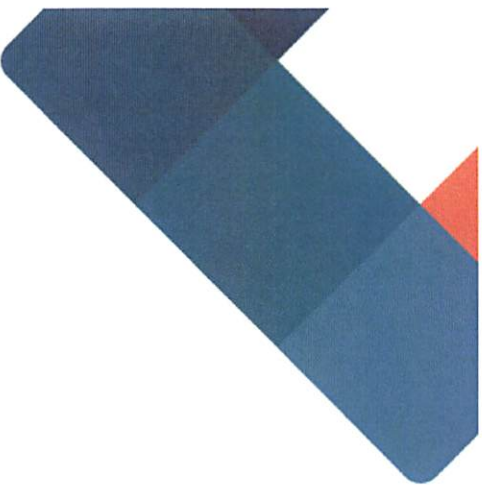
NEW YORK CITY CAMPAIGN FINANCE BOARD

RCV in NYC Outline

1. Introduction
2. What is Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)?
3. How does RCV Work?
4. Reasons to Rank
5. Next Steps

What is Ranked Choice Voting?

What is Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)?

**RCV is a new way for voters to elect their representatives**

- ◆ Voters can rank up to 5 candidates in order of preference, instead of choosing just one.

- ◆ This gives voters more say in who wins, increases civility, and can lead to more diverse candidates winning.

|	1	2	3	4	5
CANDIDATE A	○	○	●	○	○
CANDIDATE B	●	○	○	○	○
CANDIDATE C	○	●	○	○	○
CANDIDATE D	○	○	○	○	●
CANDIDATE E	○	○	○	●	○

Who uses RCV?

- Maine (+ Alaska soon)

- 17 U.S. cities (including San Francisco, Minneapolis and Santa Fe)

- the Academy Awards

FairVote
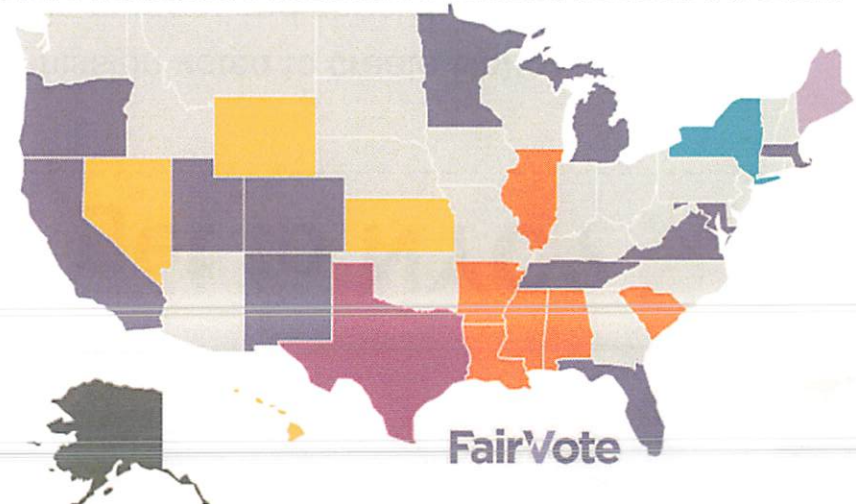
Presidential Primaries in 2020 ● RCV Used for primaries and special elections ● RCV used Statewide

● RCV used for Party Elections ● RCV used/enacted for local elections ● Ranked Ballots for Military & Overseas Voting

● Used Statewide/Presidential Primaries in 2020
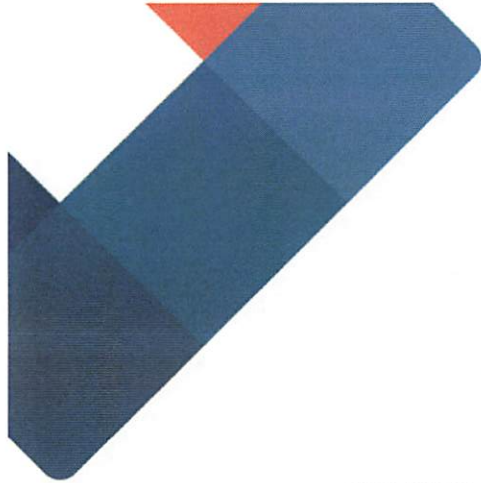
How did RCV get to NYC?

The 2019 Charter Revision Commission voted to create **Ballot Question #1**, to establish ranked choice voting in primary and special elections for local office, effective January 1, 2021.

- **73.5%** of New York City voters voted **YES**
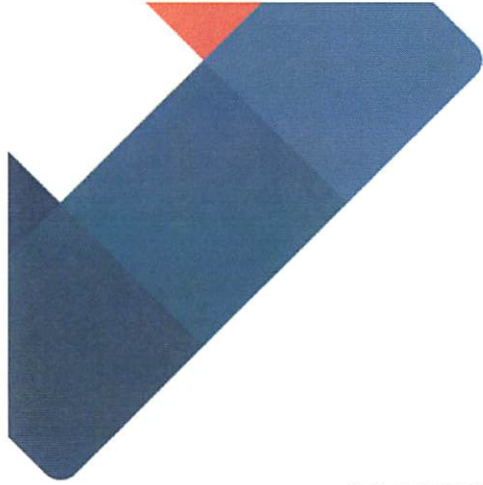
RCV in NYC

- Effective January 1, 2021
- Used in special & primary elections for city offices
- All 5 city offices:
  - Mayor
  - Public Advocate
  - Comptroller
  - Borough President
  - City Council

- Not used in general elections

- Not used for Federal or State races like President, Congress, or Governor

- Not used in local races like District Attorney and Judgeships

How did we vote for these offices before?

Single-choice plurality elections

Voters choose only *one* candidate for each office and the candidate with the highest number of votes wins.

- The winner doesn't always receive a majority (>50%) of the vote

- *Voters will still use single-choice elections for Federal, State, and certain local offices like District Attorney AND in general elections*

How did we vote for these offices before?

…With runoffs for citywide office

- If no candidate received more than 40% of the total primary election vote for Mayor, Public Advocate, and Comptroller, a run-off election took place

- *Ranked choice voting eliminates all runoff elections*
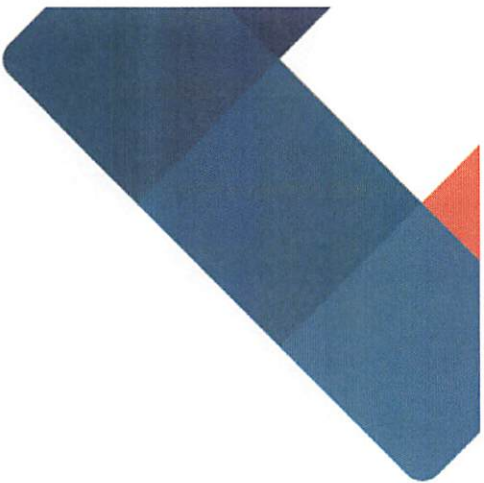
How does RCV work?

Steps for Marking a Ballot

	1	2	3	4	5
CANDIDATE A	○	○	●	○	○
CANDIDATE B	●	○	○	○	○
CANDIDATE C	○	●	○	○	○
CANDIDATE D	○	○	○	○	●
CANDIDATE E	○	○	○	●	○

- Pick your first-choice candidate and completely fill in the oval next to their name under the 1st column.

- If you have a second-choice candidate, fill in the oval next to their name under the 2nd column.

- You can rank up to 5 candidates. You can still choose to vote for only one candidate if you prefer.

Example Ballot

Council District 24 Special Election

Sample Ballot provided by the NYC Board of Elections; showing English, Spanish, and Bengali, languages vary by ED/AD

Council Member Rank up to 5 choices Mark no more than 1 oval in each column Miembro del Consejo Clasifique hasta 5 opciones Marque no más de un óvalo en cada columna কাউন্সিল সদস্য		Choice Opción 1st	Choice Opción 2nd	Choice Opción 3rd	Choice Opción 4th	Choice Opción 5th
A **Moumita Ahmed** Mo For The People	মৌমিতা আহমেদ মো ফর দ্যা পিপল	○	○	○	○	○
B **Deepti Sharma** A Better Queens	দিপ্তি শার্মা এ বেটার কুইন্স	○	○	○	○	○
C **Dilip Nath** Your Voice Matters	দিলীপ নাথ ইওর ভয়েস ম্যাটারস	○	○	○	○	○
D **Neeta Jain** Community First	নীতা জেইন কমিউনিটি ফার্স্ট	○	○	○	○	○
E **Michael Earl Brown** United Citizens	মাইকেল আর্ল ব্রাউন ইউনাইটেড সিটিজেন	○	○	○	○	○
F **Mujib U. Rahman** Unity	মুজিব উ. রহমান ইউনিটি	○	○	○	○	○
G **James F. Gennaro** Queens Strong	জেমস এফ. জেনারো কুইন্স স্ট্রং	○	○	○	○	○
H **Soma S. Syed** Soma for Queens	সোমা এস. সাঈদ সোমা ফর কুইন্স	○	○	○	○	○
Write-in candidato por escrito প্রার্থীর নাম লিখুন		○	○	○	○	○

Potential Ballot Marking Errors

- Do not give multiple candidates the same rank

	1	2	3	4	5
CANDIDATE A	○	○	○	○	○
CANDIDATE B	●	○	○	○	○
CANDIDATE C	●	○	○	●	○
CANDIDATE D	○	●	○	○	○
CANDIDATE E	○	○	●	○	○

- Do not rank a candidate more than once

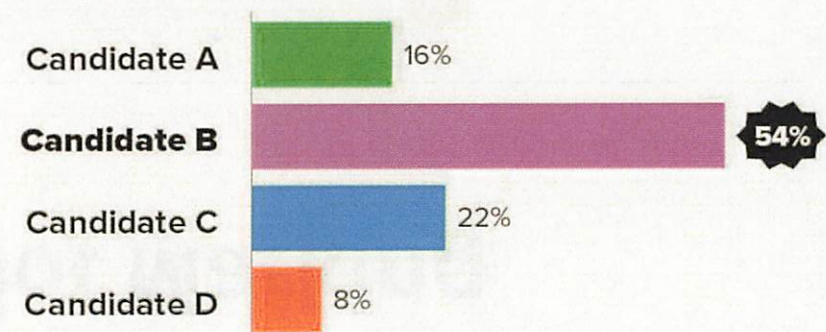|	1	2	3	4	5
CANDIDATE A	○	○	○	○	○
CANDIDATE B	●	●	●	●	●
CANDIDATE C	○	○	○	○	○
CANDIDATE D	○	○	○	○	○
CANDIDATE E	○	○	○	○	○

How your vote is counted

All first-choice votes are counted.

If a candidate receives more than 50% of first-choice votes, they win the election.

Candidate A 16%

Candidate B 54%
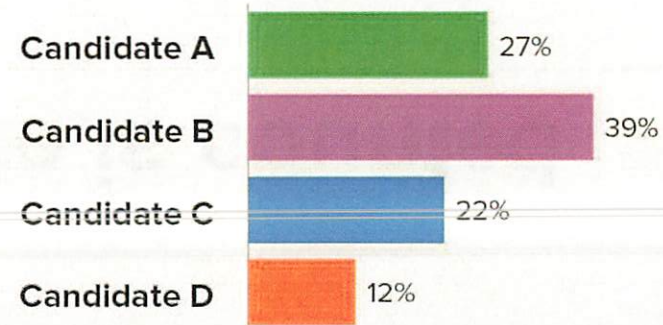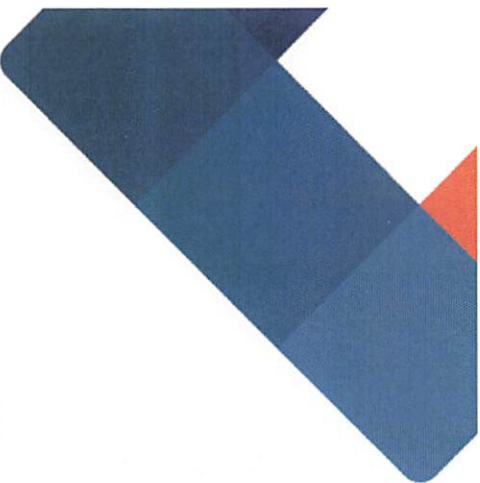
Candidate C 22%

Candidate D 8%

How your vote is counted

All first-choice votes are counted.

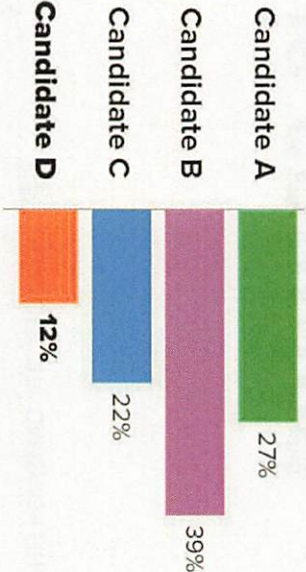If no candidate earns more than 50% of first-choice votes, then counting will continue in rounds.

Candidate	
Candidate A	27%
Candidate B	39%
Candidate C	22%
Candidate D	12%

How your vote is counted

Each round, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated.

	1	2	3	4	5
CANDIDATE A	○	○	○	○	○
CANDIDATE B	○	○	●	○	○
CANDIDATE C	○	●	○	○	○
CANDIDATE D	●	○	○	●	○

Candidate A ▓▓▓▓▓▓ 27%

Candidate B ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ 39%
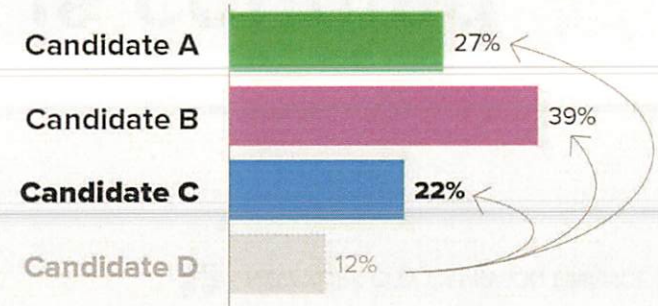
Candidate C ▓▓▓▓▓ 22%

Candidate D ▓▓▓ **12%**

How your vote is counted

If your top-choice candidate is eliminated, your vote goes to the next highest ranked candidate on your ballot.

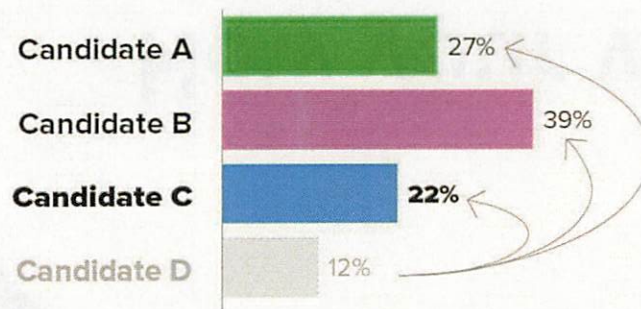|	1	2	3	4	5
CANDIDATE A	○	○	○	●	○
CANDIDATE B	○	○	●	○	○
CANDIDATE C	○	●	○	○	○
CANDIDATE D	○	○	○	○	○

Candidate A — 27%
Candidate B — 39%
Candidate C — 22%
Candidate D — 12%

How your vote is counted

VOTE DISTRIBUTION

Candidate	
Candidate A	27%
Candidate B	39%
Candidate C	**22%**
Candidate D	12%

NEW TOTALS

Candidate	
Candidate A	31%
Candidate B	45%
Candidate C	**24%**
Candidate D	

How your vote is counted

Each round, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated.

	1	2	3	4	5
CANDIDATE A	○	○	○	●	○
CANDIDATE B	○	○	●	○	○
CANDIDATE C	○	●	○	○	○
CANDIDATE D	○	○	○	○	○

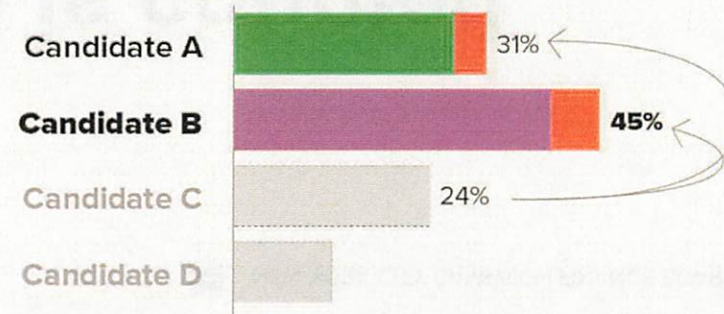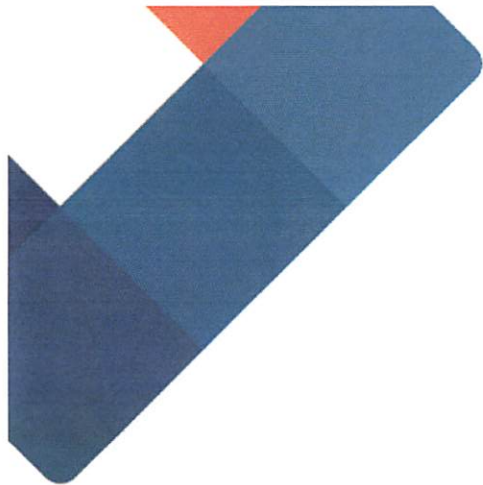Candidate A — 31%

Candidate B — 45%

Candidate C — 24%

Candidate D

How your vote is counted

If your top-choice candidate is eliminated, your vote goes to the next highest ranked candidate on your ballot.

How your vote is counted

This process continues until there are only 2 candidates left.

The candidate with the most votes wins!

	1	2	3	4	5
CANDIDATE A	○	○	○	●	○
CANDIDATE B	○	○	●	○	○
CANDIDATE C	○	○	○	○	○
CANDIDATE D	○	○	○	○	○

Candidate A — 42%

Candidate B — 58%

Candidate C

Candidate D

Main takeaways for voters

- You can rank <u>up to</u> five candidates, but you do not need to rank a total of 5.

- If you rank 5 candidates, five votes do not get counted. You always only have 1 active vote.

Main takeaways for voters

- If you prefer, you can still vote for just your first-choice candidate. However, ranking other candidates does not harm your first choice.

- By ranking multiple candidates, you can still impact who gets elected even if your top choice does not win.

- Ranking multiple candidates ensures your vote will go toward your 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th choice if your top choice is eliminated, giving you more say in who wins.

When to expect results

As we saw in 2020, the winner of some races might not be known on election night

- In half of RCV elections, there's a winner in the first round

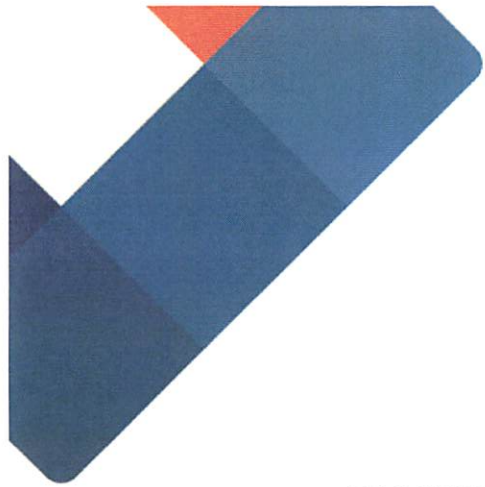- But that means that in the other half, the winner won't be known for a week or longer
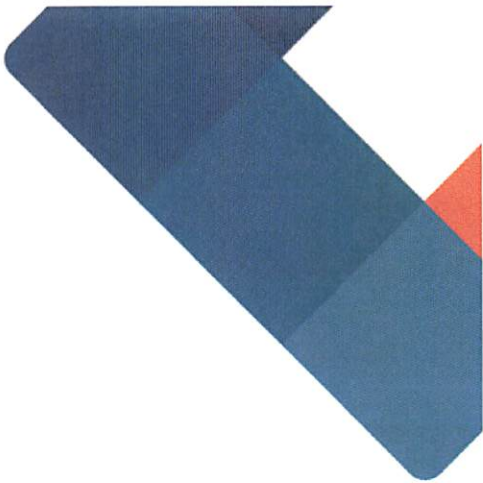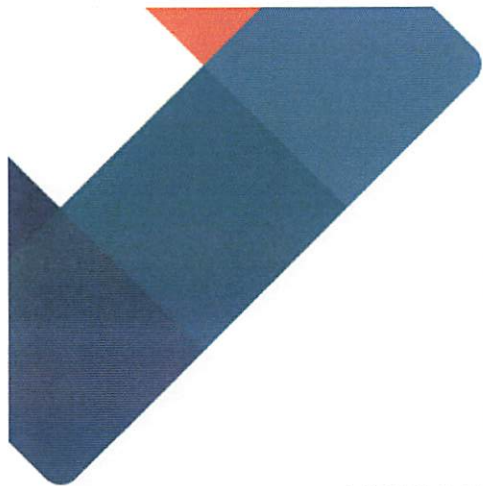
Reasons to Rank

Ways RCV benefits voters

- Voters have more say in who gets elected
- Candidates are more likely to appeal to a wider audience
- Voters elect more diverse candidates

You have more say in who gets elected

➢ *Even if your top choice does not win, you can still help choose who does*

➢ *You can vote for your top choice first, without worrying about who is likely to win*

Candidates are more likely to appeal to a wider audience

➢ *Candidates who are not your top choice still need your 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th choice vote, leading them to appeal to you instead of attacking each other*

➢ *More civility and less negativity*
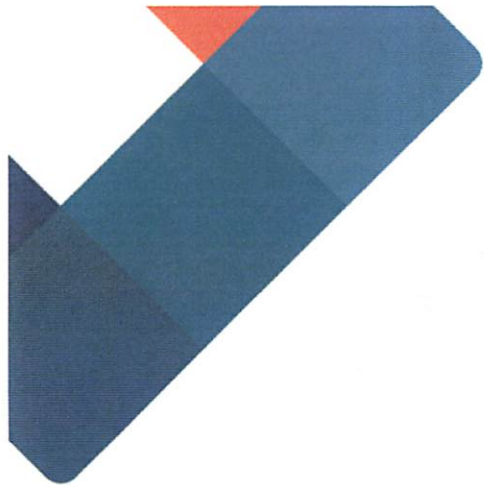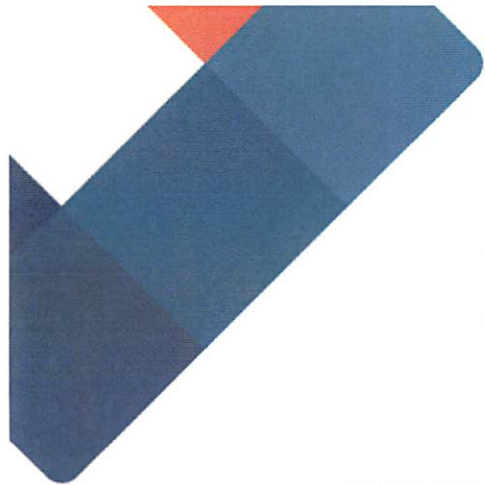
Voters elect more diverse candidates

➢ *Elected officials are more representative of the communities they serve*

➢ *In cities with Ranked Choice Voting, more women candidates and women candidates of color get elected*
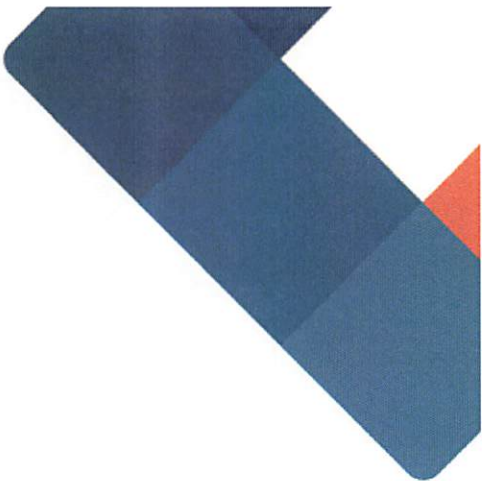
Next Steps

Education and Outreach Rollout

When will voters use RCV in 2021?

- **Queens Special Elections in February**
  - All registered voters in Council Districts 24 and 31
- **Bronx Special Elections in March**
  - All registered voters in Council Districts 11 and 15
- **Primary Election in June**
  - All New Yorkers registered to a political party

Queens Special Elections

Queens District 24 (Rory Lancman)

Kew Gardens Hills, Pomonok, Electchester, Fresh Meadows, Hillcrest, Jamaica Estates, Briarwood, Parkway Village, Jamaica Hills, Jamaica

- ◆ February 2, 2021 (early voting January 23-31)

Queens District 31 (Donovan Richards)

Arverne, Brookville, Edgemere, Far Rockaway, Laurelton, Rosedale, Springfield Gardens

- ◆ February 23, 2021 (early voting February 13-21)
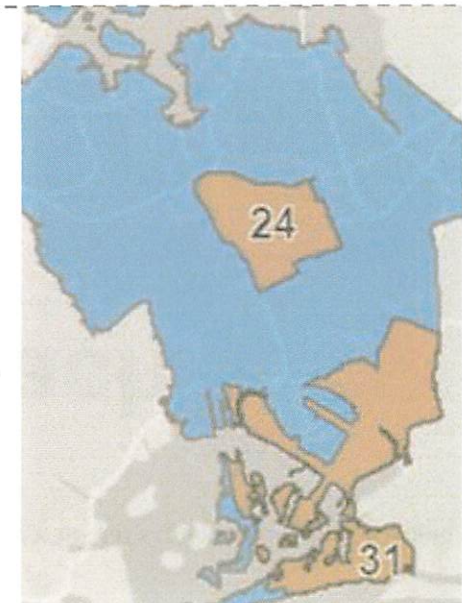
Bronx Special Elections
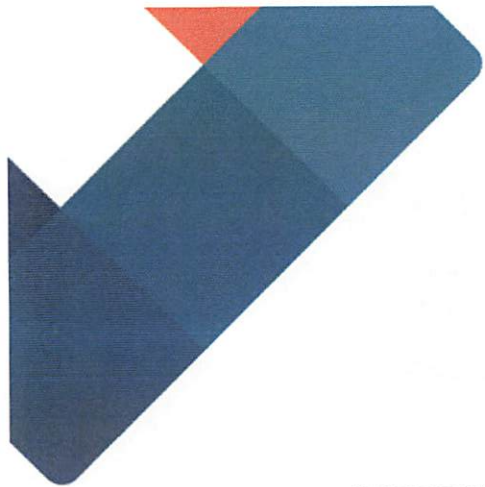
Bronx District 11 (Andy Cohen)

Bedford Park, Kingsbridge, Riverdale, Norwood, Van Cortlandt Village, Wakefield, Woodlawn

Bronx District 15 (Ritchie Torres)

Bedford Park, Fordham, Mount Hope, Bathgate, Belmont, East Tremont, West Farms, Van Nest, Allerton, Olinville
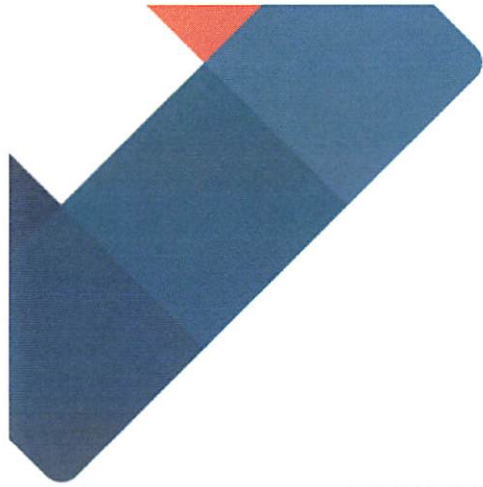
- ◆ March 23, 2021 (early voting March 13-21)

Citywide Primary Elections

June 22, 2021 (early voting June 12 - 20)

- Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller
- Borough Presidents
- 51 City Council races

Other Resources for RCV information

NYC Campaign Finance Board

◆ General voting information: voting.nyc

◆ RCV in NYC: nyccfb.info/rcv

◆ FAQ: nyccfb.info/rcvfaqs

◆ Twitter, Facebook, Instagram: @nycvotes

Other Resources for RCV information

NYC Board of Elections

- Information about RCV: https://vote.nyc/page/ranked-choice-voting

- Special Election Info: https://vote.nyc/page/upcoming-2021-special-elections

- Poll site locator: https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/

- Twitter: @boenyc

Contact information
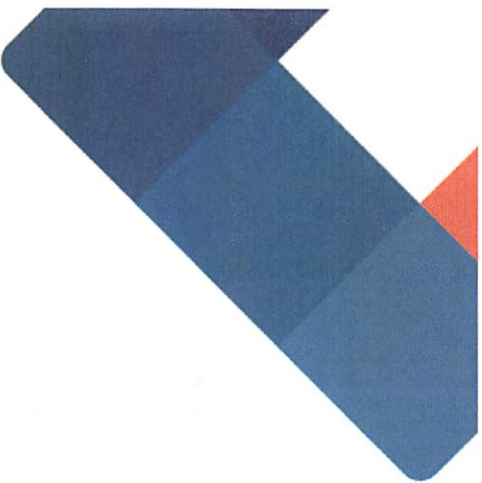
NEW YORK CITY CAMPAIGN FINANCE BOARD
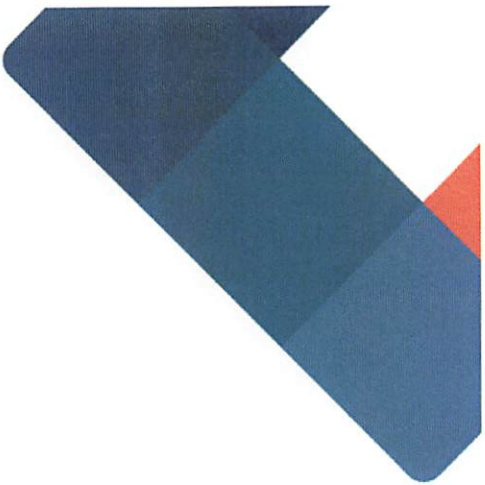
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Open Discussion and Questions!