

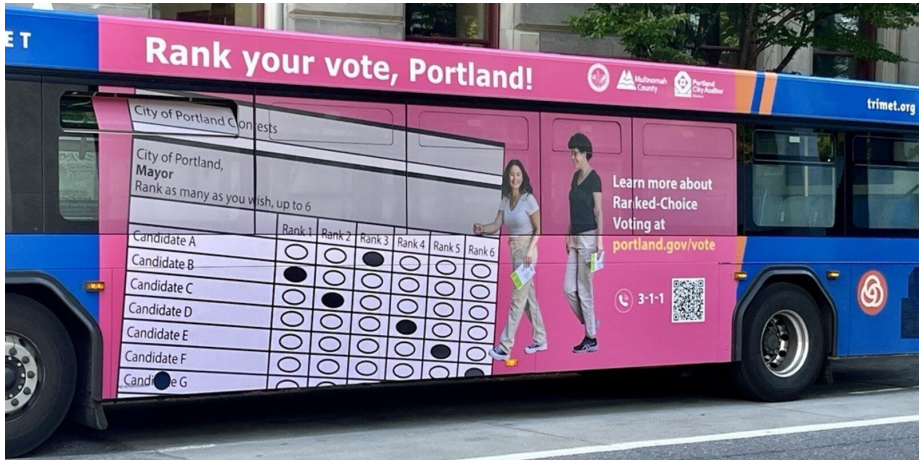


Exit Poll - Portland voters were well informed on ranked-choice voting

Press Release

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City Auditor's Office Commissioned Exit Poll: A majority of Portland voters were well informed on ranked-choice voting, improvement needed in outreach to District 1 and with people of color

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact

[Deborah Scroggin, City Elections Division Manager](#)

The City of Portland Elections Division contracted with FM3, an opinion research firm, to poll Portland voters on their experience with the City's first-ever ranked-choice election. The poll surveyed 1,658 Portland voters with a 2.8% margin of error. The purpose of the poll was to learn how voters engaged with, understood, and experienced various aspects of the election. The Auditor's Office, which houses the Elections Division, plans to use the findings in conjunction with forthcoming official voter behavior reports, data, and evaluations to inform policymakers and direct future voter education efforts.

Portland voters report high level of understanding with new ranked-choice ballots

Of those polled, **85%** said they were aware of ranked-choice voting prior to voting and **91%** reported understanding how to fill out their ballot. Alongside this, the polling indicates that those who had heard about ranked-choice voting were much more likely to understand their ballot. These figures represent the importance of active voter education campaigns on reported levels of ballot understanding.

Nationally, these figures compare strongly to other jurisdictions, according to similar surveys following the implementation of ranked-choice voting. The figures are promising but additional data indicates the need for continued focus on comprehensive and equitable voter education.

Improvements needed in outreach to voters of color

Voters of color broadly report awareness of ranked-choice voting (73%) and understanding their ranked-choice ballot (86%). However, only 35% of voters of color reported “a great deal” of awareness and only 48% reported understanding their ballot “very well”. This year, for the first time, the City undertook culturally specific voter education in partnership with community-based organizations. However, more work can be done to increase awareness in these communities, and therefore understanding of the ballot. Figure 1 shows awareness and understanding by race and ethnicity.

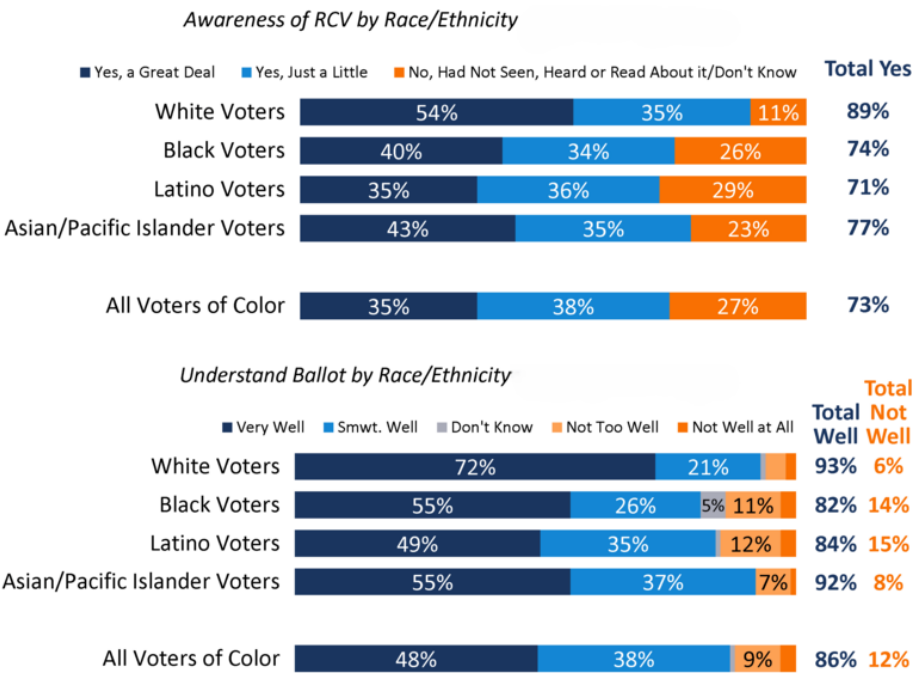


Figure 1. Awareness and understanding by race and ethnicity.

Voter participation and understanding varied by district

[Recently released certified county election data](#) shows that District 1 City Council voter participation rates were 43%, while participation in other districts ranged from 64% to 66%. Overall participation rates in District 1 largely track with historical trends of lower voter turnout in East Portland, however, the Auditor’s Office is working to better understand this trend. The causes for low participation are complex but can include the level of dedicated voter education, number of candidates on a ballot, trust in the election system or local government, and political ideologies, among other factors. A more detailed analysis of this data will be available in our December 18 Report to Council.

Of those polled, a majority of District 1 voters report being aware of ranked-choice voting prior to casting a ballot (76%) and understanding their ballot at least “somewhat well” (89%). However, only 40% of District 1 voters report “a great deal” of awareness and only 55% report understanding their ballot “very well”. These numbers trail behind the rest of the city and indicate that more voter engagement could lead to higher rates of understanding. Figure 2 shows awareness and understanding by city council district.

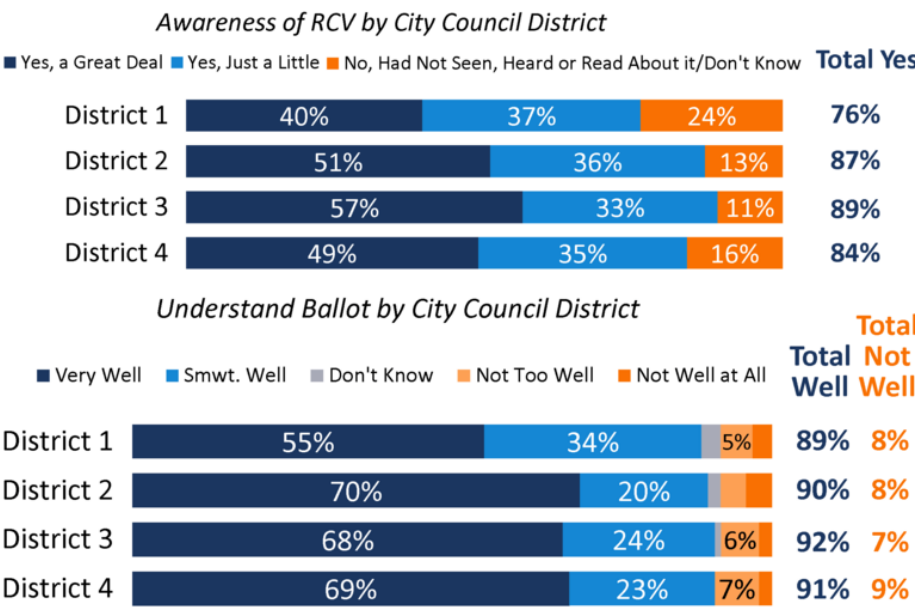


Figure 2. Awareness and understanding by city council district.

Certification of Elections Results and future voter education efforts

On December 18, the City Elections Division will present its official November 5, 2024 election report to City Council to certify the results, declare winners of Portland’s new elected government, and proclaim measures approved by voters. The report will include voter participation data as well as presentation of more detailed poll results. Comprehensive data will be released on December 18 via the [Elections Division website](#) for public review.

The City’s charter requires the City to provide “periodic” voter education campaigns to inform the public. In future elections cycles the Auditor’s Office

will be responsible for providing voter education for the City and will maintain a focus on providing equitable and evidence-based voter education, through partnerships with City, county, and community leaders.

"Broadly, Portland voters report an understanding of ranked-choice voting according to this poll, an encouraging start for an historic electoral reform" said Deborah Scroggin, City Elections Division Manager. "We look forward to a deeper analysis and strategically investing in voter education to ensure every Portlander feels confident casting their vote in future elections."

[View summary exit poll documents](#)