

CITY of ALBUQUERQUE

TWENTY SIXTH COUNCIL

COUNCIL BILL NO. O-24-26 ENACTMENT NO. _____

SPONSORED BY: Nichole Rogers and Tammy Fiebelkorn

1 **ORDINANCE**

2 **ADOPTING A RANKED CHOICE VOTING SYSTEM, REPEALING AND**
3 **REPLACING ARTICLE II, SECTIONS 7 AND 8 OF THE CITY CHARTER, AND**
4 **DIRECTING THE CITY CLERK TO DEVELOP EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS.**

5 **WHEREAS, The City of Albuquerque City Charter includes an election**
6 **provision requiring elected office holders to receive at least 50% of the total**
7 **number of votes cast for their respective office in order to be elected, stating:**
8 **“Those persons who are candidates for Mayor or Councilor and receive the**
9 **largest number of votes cast for the office in question are elected, provided**
10 **the number of votes equals or exceeds 50% of the total number of votes cast**
11 **for the office.”; and**

12 **WHEREAS, At present, if not candidate for office meets the 50% threshold**
13 **required by the Charter, a runoff election must be held within 45 days where**
14 **the two candidates with the highest number of votes cat are placed on the**
15 **ballot; and**

16 **WHEREAS, Since the runoff provisions have been in place, the City has**
17 **been required to hold five runoff elections, including:**

- 18 **• A City Council runoff election in 2013 (which included a city-wide**
19 **election in order to also accommodate a ballot initiative), which cost**
20 **the City \$667,045;**
- 21 **• A Mayoral runoff election in 2017, which cost the City \$840,890;**
- 22 **• A City Council runoff election in 2019, which cost the City \$368,675;**
23 **• Two City Council runoff elections in 2021, which cost the City**
24 **\$610,424; and**
- 25 **• A City Council runoff election in 2023, which cost the City \$500,000;**
26 **and**

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1 WHEREAS, A ranked choice voting system, also commonly referred to as
2 an “instant runoff” would help eliminate costly separate runoff elections in the
3 City, and avoid holding a runoff in the middle of the winter holiday season for
4 candidates, elected officials, voters; and

5 WHEREAS, In contrast to the City’s current post-election runoff system, a
6 ranked choice voting system would provide voters the opportunity to rank
7 candidates by preference on their ballots during regular local elections; and

8 WHEREAS, Runoff elections often suffer from significantly lower turnout
9 compared to the initial election. Adopting a ranked choice voting system and
10 allowing voters to express their preferences for multiple candidates in the
11 initial election could lead to higher overall voter participation in elections; and

12 WHEREAS, Ranked choice voting and “instant runoffs” are another tool,
13 similar to early voting, expanded voting hours, and mail-in and absentee
14 voting that can be used to accommodate various barriers to voter
15 participation, including but not limited to, work commitments, childcare
16 responsibilities, and transportation issues; and

17 WHEREAS, An education campaign administered by Clerk’s Office will
18 inform the public about the transition to ranked choice voting, explain how the
19 system functions, and encourage voter participation; and

20 WHEREAS, In New Mexico, both Santa Fe and Las Cruces use ranked
21 choice voting in their local elections, and it has been adopted in additional 60+
22 jurisdictions nationwide; and

23 WHEREAS, State Law allows municipalities to amend their Charter by
24 ordinance to allow for a ranked-choice runoff election. NMSA 1978, §1-22-16.

25 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF
26 ALBUQUERQUE:

27 SECTION 1. Article II, Sections 7 and 8 of the City Charter are hereby
28 repealed and replaced with the following:

29 “Section 7. RANKED CHOICE VOTING

30 (a) Pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 1-22-16, the City of Albuquerque
31 adopts a ranked-choice runoff election to allow voters participating in the
32 regular local election to rank the candidates for Mayor and City Council in the
33 order of preference for the voter.

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1 (b) The City will begin using ranked-choice voting with the regular local
2 election held in November of 2025 and will continue to do so in all subsequent
3 elections.

4 (c) A ranked-choice runoff election shall be conducted on the same
5 ballot as the regular local election to allow the voter to rank the candidates for
6 office in the voter’s preferred order.

7 (d) The City will adhere to and comply with the rules governing ranked-
8 choice runoff elections issued by the New Mexico Secretary of State.]”

9 SECTION 2. The City Clerk is directed to develop and administer an
10 educational campaign that will inform the public about the City’s transition to
11 Ranked Choice Voting, explain how the system functions, and encourage
12 voter understanding and participation. The City Clerk is encouraged to
13 collaborate with other jurisdictions that have adopted RCV, including, but not
14 limited to, Santa Fe and Las Cruces.

15 SECTION 3. SEVERABILITY. If any section, paragraph, sentence, clause,
16 word or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or
17 unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not
18 affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this Ordinance. The Council
19 hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each section,
20 paragraph, sentence, clause, word or phrase thereof irrespective of any
21 provision being declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid.

22 SECTION 4. COMPILATION. SECTION 1 of this Ordinance shall amend, be
23 incorporated in, and be made part of the City Charter of the City of
24 Albuquerque.

25 SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Ordinance takes effect five (5) days
26 after publication by title and general summary.

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