Ranked Choice Voting / Instant Runoff

Ranked choice voting (RCV) makes democracy more fair and functional. It works in a variety of contexts. It is a simple change that can have a big impact.

With ranked choice voting, voters can rank as many candidates as they want in order of choice. Candidates do best when they attract a strong core of first-choice support while also reaching out for second and even third choices. When used as an "instant runoff" to elect a single candidate like a mayor or a governor, RCV helps elect a candidate that better reflects the support of a majority of voters. When used as a form of fair representation voting to elect more than one candidate like a city council, state legislature or even Congress, RCV helps to more fairly represent the full spectrum of voters.

See interactive US Map

Using RCV now:

- **Basalt, Colorado**: Adopted in 2002 and will be used when three or more candidates run for mayor.
- **Berkeley, California**: Adopted in 2004 and has been used since 2010 to elect the mayor, city council and city auditor
- **Cambridge, Massachusetts**: In use since the 1940s in multi-winner RCV form for the nine seat city council and six seat school board elected citywide
- **Carbondale, Colorado**: Adopted in 2002 for mayor when there are three or more candidates
- **Minneapolis, Minnesota**: Adopted in 2006 and used since 2009, in elections for 22 city offices, including mayor and city council in single winner elections and some multi-winner park board seats
- **Oakland, California**: Adopted in 2006 and used since 2010 for a total of 18 city offices, including mayor and city council
- **Portland, Maine**: Adopted in 2010 and used since 2011 for electing mayor
- **Maine**: Adopted in 2016 and first used in June 2018 for all state and federal primary elections
- **San Francisco, California**: Adopted in 2002 and used since 2004 to elect the mayor, city attorney, Board of Supervisors and five additional citywide offices
- **San Leandro, California**: Adopted as option in 2000 charter amendment and used since 2010 to elect the mayor and city council
- **Santa Fe, New Mexico**: Adopted in 2008 and used since March 2018 for mayor, city council, and municipal judge
• **St. Paul, Minnesota**: Adopted in 2009, used since 2011 to elect the mayor and city council
• **Takoma Park, Maryland**: Adopted in 2006 and used since 2007 in all elections for mayor and city council
• **Telluride, Colorado**: Adopted in 2008 and used since 2011 to elect the mayor when three candidates run, as in 2011 and 2015

**Upcoming implementations:**

• **Amherst, Massachusetts**: Adopted charter in 2018 with ranked choice voting and passing implementation statute before projected first use in 2021.
• **Benton County, Oregon**: Adopted by voters in 2016 for elected county offices including sheriff and county commissioner. It will be used in 2020.
• **Las Cruces, New Mexico**: Adopted by the city council in 2018 for all municipal elections beginning in 2019.
• **St. Louis Park, Minnesota**: Adopted in 2018 for municipal offices including mayor and city council. It will be used in 2019.
• **Memphis, Tennessee**: Adopted by voters in 2008, and approved again by voters in 2018. It will be used in 2019.

**Advisory or option for future uses:**

• **Davis, California**: adopted in 2006 as an advisory referendum for fair representation form of RCV and awaiting state law change.
• **Ferndale, Michigan**: adopted by voters in 2004, awaiting implementation readiness.
• **Santa Clara County, California**: approved in charter by voters as option in 1998.
• **Sarasota, Florida**: adopted by voters in 2007, awaiting implementation readiness.
• **Utah**: Several cities in 2018 acted to make RCV an option in 2019.
• **Vancouver, Washington**: approved in charter by voters as option in 1999.

**For overseas voters in runoffs**

• **Arkansas**: Adopted in 2005, first used 2006, and was extended to all local runoffs in 2007.
• **Alabama**: By agreement with a federal court, used in special election for U.S. House, 2013; became law for all federal primary runoffs in 2015.
• **Louisiana**: Adopted and used since the 1990s for state and federal general election runoffs; also includes out of state military voters.
• **Mississippi**: Adopted in 2014 for use in federal runoffs.
• **South Carolina**: Adopted and first used in 2006 for state and federal runoffs.
**Springfield, Illinois:** Adopted in 2007 and used since 2011.

### RCV on Campus

Over 50 colleges and universities in the United States use ranked choice voting to elect some or all student government positions. That means that over 700,000 students across the country are empowered with more choice in electing student leaders.

[Full list of colleges and universities using RCV for student government elections](#)

### Private Organizations and Corporations

Recommended by [Robert’s Rules of Order](#) for organizational elections conducted by mail, ranked choice voting is used widely among private associations organizations. Probably its highest profile use by a private organization is in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, who use RCV to nominate and select winners of the prestigious Academy Awards. Ranked choice voting in multi-winner elections is commonly used by British organizations as well.

Too many organizations use RCV for a comprehensive list. Here is a [partial list of private organizations and corporations using RCV](#).

### Public Elections Internationally

Ranked choice voting is used by every voter in Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, Malta, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, often with the multi-winner, proportional form of it (“single transferable vote”). RCV also is used in party elections and local elections throughout the English-speaking world, including national leaders of the major conservative parties in Canada and New Zealand and major liberal parties in Canada and United Kingdom.

Examples of uses of RCV include: Australia (federal House of Representatives and nearly all state and local government elections and a multi-winner form of it for senate elections); Ireland (for president and multi-winner form for parliament and many local elections; Malta (multi-winner form for parliament; New Zealand (for mayor and city council in major cities such as Wellington, along with health board elections); Northern Ireland (multi-winner form for regional parliament and most local elections); Scotland (multi-winner form for all local government elections). In India, Nepal and Pakistan elected officials use the multi-winner from of RCV to select their national senates and in the case of India its president. Forms of RCV are also used to elect the mayor of London and president of Sri Lanka.