



Bipartisan Policy Center

Reform Meets Reality: How Ranked Choice Voting Impacts Election Administration

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Introduction

Debates about electoral reforms—in particular, ranked choice voting (RCV)—have grown more common in recent years. These debates focus heavily on important issues like the potential effects on voter turnout,¹ the tone and civility of political campaigns,² partisan polarization,³ and representation.⁴ Too often overlooked, however, are reforms’ implications for election administration, which will determine whether any preferred changes can succeed in practice.

This report gives policymakers, reform advocates, and voters practical insights from election administrators that should be weighed alongside other considerations when deciding whether to change an electoral system.

Dozens of states in 2024 considered adopting electoral reforms like RCV through either their state legislative process⁵ or by putting the question directly to voters on the ballot.⁶ As with any other political question, state lawmakers and voters are usually inundated with a variety of arguments for why these reforms should or should not be adopted.

The Bipartisan Policy Center believes the perspectives of those who run elections—election officials—deserve significant weight. They have firsthand knowledge of how elections actually operate and how voters interact with the electoral system.⁷ Too often, their views and insights are undervalued, and the effects of reforms on election administration are treated as afterthoughts. That approach is misguided, and it increases the risk of unnecessary burdens on election officials, operational failures, and diminished public confidence.

Jurisdictions Consulted in Research

BPC staff consulted with current and former election officials from 25 jurisdictions across the country.

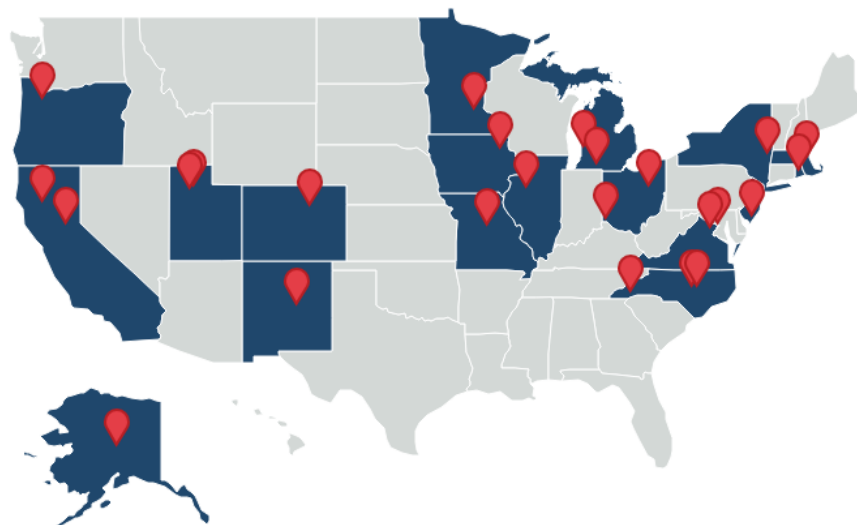


Figure 1: Jurisdictions Consulted in Research

The report's findings report draw on interviews and survey responses from a diverse set of election administrators, including those who have and have not implemented ranked choice voting. Election administrators expressed genuine concerns about the challenges of transitioning to RCV. Yet, those who have already done so approached the task with the doggedness, resourcefulness, and a sense of duty that is common in the profession.

Four overarching topics emerged as particularly crucial and are analyzed in detail below:

1. Budget considerations and financial costs;
2. Timing and complexity of implementation;
3. Public engagement, education, and confidence;
4. Impacts on administration.

The report concludes with advice for facilitating a successful transition to ranked choice voting based on information provided by election officials who have implemented RCV.

The scope and findings of this report are limited to electoral system reforms that would allow voters to rank or select multiple candidates for the same office on a single ballot, typically referred to as RCV or instant runoff voting (IRV). The report, however, should also serve as an illustration of why election administrators' views must be included when policymakers consider electoral reforms generally. As this report details, reforms to the electoral system often come with unintended or unanticipated consequences. Other common proposals—such as proportional voting, cumulative voting, or fusion voting—likely have their own election administration implications, which should be examined during public debate about their efficacy.

Finally, BPC neither endorses nor opposes ranked choice voting. Past BPC research has shown that reforms like RCV can increase voter turnout, typically at higher rates than other open primary reforms. Still, RCV is a relatively recent phenomenon in statewide elections, and only a few states and localities across the country use it. Such nascency makes sweeping, national characterizations dubious. Rather, states should continue to experiment with reform options, and public debates regarding reforms should involve a fulsome airing of considerations.

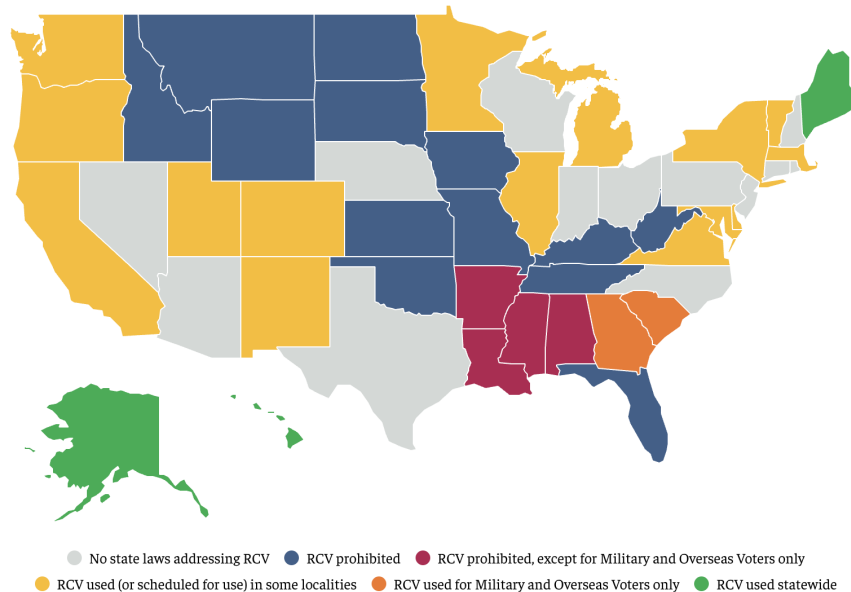
What Is RCV?

Ranked choice voting is a general term that applies to instant runoff elections and single transferable vote elections. Most voters in the United States are familiar with first-past-the-post (FPTP) elections, where voters select one candidate per office and the candidate with a plurality of votes is the winner. Some elections require a winner to receive a majority of votes and may involve a subsequent runoff between the top two candidates.

In an RCV system, voters rank multiple candidates for the same office in order of preference. If no candidate receives a majority of votes in the first round, the last-place candidate will be eliminated. Voters who cast their first preference vote for the eliminated candidate will have their vote transferred to their second choice. This process is repeated in multiple rounds until a candidate receives a majority of votes.

Some jurisdictions use RCV only for the general election, with candidates being selected through FPTP party primaries. Others use RCV in combination with an all-candidate primary, which initially winnows the field to a certain number of candidates. An RCV general election then follows.

Ranked Choice Voting in the U.S.



Source: Ballotpedia. Last Accessed 9/16/2025. Retrieved from Ranked-choice voting (RCV) - Ballotpedia.

Figure 2: Ranked Choice Voting in the U.S.

Budget Considerations and Financial Costs

- Implementing a new electoral system inevitably adds new costs, which can vary widely by state and jurisdiction.
- RCV brings two categories of costs: one-time transition expenses and ongoing annual operational costs.
- Policymakers and voters must carefully weigh the trade-offs of adopting a new electoral system, especially given that most election offices already face tight budgets.
- Policymakers should strengthen financial support for election administration when legislating any changes to the voting process.
- Over time, transitioning to RCV may produce cost savings for some jurisdictions, especially if it replaces costly runoff elections.

For election officials, both at the center of transitioning to RCV and for those anticipating the oncoming changes, funding is often the first and most daunting obstacle.

Cost considerations extend across every phase of the process, including planning and timing, public outreach, staff training, technology upgrades, election administration, and postelection reporting and auditing.

Many advocates champion RCV for its potential to reduce the costs of running elections. However, this argument generally applies to a long-term reduction in costs resulting from the elimination of runoff elections.⁸ Election administrators, on the other hand, are concerned that transitioning to RCV initially boosts expenses at a time when election office budgets are already constrained and when other aspects of the election system need investment and modernization.

In those jurisdictions that have adopted RCV, experience shows that the upfront costs can be substantial, particularly for voter education, equipment upgrades, and external support from consultants, temporary staff, or other election administration vendors. Before making any decisions on ranked choice voting, policymakers should assess the broad context and the financial implications of adopting RCV, including on existing infrastructure, jurisdiction size, rollout strategy, and election laws.

Policymakers and voters should be cognizant of two types of costs involved with transitioning to a new electoral system like RCV. First, jurisdictions will face one-time startup costs to adapt the existing system. This expense might

include new voting equipment and software, the hiring of temporary staff or consultants to help navigate the transition, training for election officials and workers, and public education campaigns. Second, the new system will incur recurring annual expenses. These may include additional ballot paper and printing costs due to longer ballots, the need for supplemental training for election workers, hiring permanent staff to manage unique aspects of the new system, and ongoing public education and engagement that continues beyond the first election cycle. Because few comprehensive, up-to-date cost studies of RCV exist, decision-makers should benchmark against similarly situated jurisdictions.

The cost of implementation varies widely. A 2022 National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) survey⁹ found that average one-time costs of implementing RCV were \$155,000. However, when the highest and lowest outliers from its survey were removed, the average cost dropped to roughly \$40,000. For some jurisdictions, one-time expenses were considerably higher.

LOCALITIES

When Minneapolis implemented RCV in 2009, it budgeted \$365,000. This included \$122,000 in one-time startup costs, \$109,500 for voter education and outreach, and \$131,000 for hand counting ballots.¹⁰

Ahead of New York City's 2018 RCV adoption, the Fiscal Policy Institute estimated one-time costs to range from "\$100,000 to \$500,000 in computer programming and other minor changes."¹¹ The city also announced a \$15 million public education campaign, which included \$2 million dedicated to translating educational materials into more than 18 languages.¹²

In 2024, Multnomah County, OR, home to much of the city of Portland, spent \$353,910 on one-time RCV transition expenses, including voting software, educational material design, results formatting, and research.¹³

STATES

For Maine's 2018 RCV implementation, the total costs for the primary and general election that year were \$440,000, including \$268,000 to print an additional ballot page.¹⁴

Alaska budgeted roughly \$3.5 million ahead of its 2022 RCV rollout, with most of the spending tied to one-time costs. The budget included the purchase of over 100 new ballot tabulators, translating the ballots and instructions into 11 languages, and investing heavily in voter education campaigns. It also included costs for an unexpected special election.

Varying RCV Implementation Costs

A visual summary of one-time RCV implementation costs.

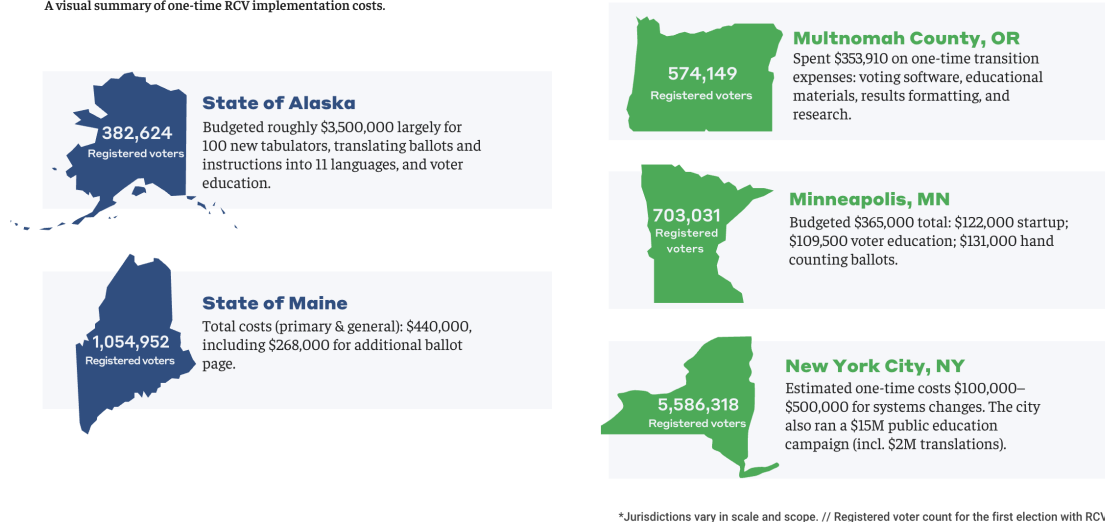


Figure 3: Varying RCV Implementation Costs

One-time expenses are highly variable depending on local conditions. For instance, officials in North Carolina successfully conducted a special judicial election using RCV in 2010 even though no additional funds were made available. Certain categories of expenses can vary as well. Officials in Arlington, VA, for example, did not incur costs for voting equipment, as their existing technology supported RCV tabulation, and the state picked up the cost of developing tabulation software that met state standards.

RCV adoption also often results in new or increased recurring expenses, especially for voter education, additional ballot paper, and training for temporary staff and poll workers.

On voter education, election officials often host informational coffee hours, place educational mailer inserts into utility bills, and host mock elections so that voters can practice using the new system. They also use traditional advertising to reach their constituents.

The cost of ballot paper commonly increases because of the longer ballots and instructions related to RCV. Multnomah County reported spending \$313,950 on extra ballot paper in 2024 to accommodate the length of an RCV ballot with 30 candidates and instructions.

Another common recurring expense involves providing supplemental RCV training for staff and poll workers. These employees are on the frontline of explaining to voters how RCV voting and tabulation works. Jurisdictions can accomplish this training through a variety of means, including by hiring temporary staff and consultants with expertise in the new voting system.

These expenses can also vary between election and non-election years. Multnomah County, for example, anticipates \$174,920 in ongoing expenses in non-election years and \$598,826 in election years.

While RCV can be costly upfront, NCSL suggests that it may be more cost-effective over time, especially when it eliminates expensive, low-turnout runoff contests. However, such a benefit means that long-term savings may be limited for jurisdictions that do not hold runoffs.

Timing and Complexity of Implementation

- Election officials repeatedly emphasized the need for ample lead time before the first election administered using RCV.
- Adequate lead time depends on local conditions, particularly jurisdiction size, staffing, and existing infrastructure.
- Policymakers and voters should expect problems when election administrators have to expedite reforms on short timelines.
- Nonpresidential or off-year elections are better opportunities for RCV roll-out because ballots are simpler and political pressures are lower.
- Election officials who have transitioned to RCV report that it takes about two election cycles for full implementation.

TIMING OF IMPLEMENTATION

Policymakers, voters, and advocates must pay careful attention to the implementation timeline for electoral reforms. Transitioning to a system like RCV is a significant undertaking involving a variety of activities that generally cannot be completed in a matter of months. For example, jurisdictions may need to procure new voting equipment or ballot tabulators, as older models may not have the ability to rank candidate selections. Administrators will have to update standard operating procedures for pre-election, Election Day, and postelection activities, especially with respect to ballot reconciliation. The typical ballot designs and absentee voting materials need to be updated to reflect the new system requirements, and staff and volunteers may need special training—which itself needs to be developed—and public education campaigns need to be planned and executed.

BPC generally recommends a one-year lead time for the implementation of new election administration policies and procedures, and cautions that longer lead times may be needed for major changes like adopting same-day registration or rolling out all-new voting equipment.¹⁵ Transitioning to ranked choice voting will likely involve at least as much, if not more, time.

The lead time for any one jurisdiction will vary depending on the ease of adapting current systems to the new one. Some jurisdictions already own equipment capable of administering a ranked choice election while others do not. Arlington officials only had about four to five months to implement RCV. The main obstacle they faced was procuring RCV software for their existing tabulation equipment that met Virginia’s tabulation guidelines. The state ultimately funded the development of RCV software that fit within the regulations, and the county was able to avoid incurring this additional cost; not every jurisdiction will be so fortunate. Conveniently, the first election to use RCV was a county board primary—a typically lower pressure experience for election officials—and Arlington election administrators successfully conducted their first RCV election despite the short implementation timeline.

COMPLEXITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Jurisdictions with larger staff and budgets may be better able to manage the transition to RCV. First, they can delegate discrete aspects of it to a wider swath of staff, versus concentrating the work on individuals who do not have as much flexible capacity. The city of Portland, OR, for example, uniquely sprawls across three counties. During the implementation process, a cohort of election officials worked together to ensure a smooth transition to the new voting system. However, even with their staff capacity and impressive coordination, Portland’s election officials considered their two-year implementation timeline challenging due to the technology and software updates needed and the timing of several other structural government changes mandated in tandem with the RCV rollout. Second, jurisdictions with larger budgets may be able to delegate some of the increased burden to outside vendors for marketing and training. These experts can assist with public education campaigns or the creation of new poll worker training modules.

Like Portland, New York City election officials had two years to implement RCV. During the Democratic mayoral primary in 2021, the first use of RCV in the city, election officials accidentally included 135,000 sample ballots—used to test tabulation software before the election—in the official results. The correction of this error delayed the release of certified election results and decreased voter trust in ranked choice voting.¹⁶

As with routine issues during any election, it is important that officials rectify these problems quickly, which requires familiarity and preparation. But policymakers and voters should expect that some administrative errors will occur during even well-managed transitions to RCV, as election administrators must gain experience on a new system.

The selection of the first election cycle under a new electoral system is important. The best time to roll out a new electoral system is during state or local-only elections, followed by midterm elections. Nonpresidential and off-year elections are ideal for the rollout of any election administration changes, especially large ones like RCV. Presidential elections almost invariably involve a high level of political tension and scrutiny. Policymakers must consider how additional pressure on election officials from managing a transition to RCV will affect their performance. Further, these high-stakes elections may be more prone to skepticism and conspiracy theories if the public is experiencing a new form of voting at the same time. This will likely be worsened by instances of confusion or mistake due to new procedures, equipment, and results reporting.

For election administrators, it may take two to three election cycles for the new system to reach a state of normalcy. Officials will learn lessons, adapt, and redesign their operations after the initial RCV election. Staff and volunteers will also need to experience more than one election with the new system before they feel comfortable. Other stakeholders—including candidates, news media, and the general public—may similarly need to experience more than one election before the new system reaches a similar sense of routineness.

Public Engagement, Education, and Confidence

- Successful RCV implementation depends on robust public education to ensure that voters, the media, and candidates all understand the new system.
- Jurisdictions use a variety of approaches for public education campaigns, and some have achieved effective outreach at relatively low cost.
- Voter education efforts are likely to continue beyond the first RCV election.
- Even with extensive public outreach, some voters may remain skeptical of the new system.

Public engagement is a crucial part of election administration, and it includes educating voters, candidates, and the media on elections processes. Introducing a new electoral system like RCV isn't just a technical challenge; it is also a civic effort. Success depends as much on community engagement and public trust as it does on the hardware and software of the voting systems.

Overhauling an election system to implement RCV can spur a host of questions from voters, and the impact on election administrators' responsibilities to educate the public must be considered. When policymakers legislate changes to voting systems, it often falls to election officials to make sure voters know

how those changes will affect their voting experience and the tabulation of their votes. Candidates, the media, and other third parties will also fill some of the education gaps, providing voters with information on the voting changes they may experience.

In anticipation of the confusion voters may face with a new ballot and tabulation and reporting processes, most election officials who have implemented RCV systems put immense effort and, in some cases, substantial funding into voter education campaigns. Former Maine Secretary of State Matt Dunlap attributes much of the state's successful transition to RCV to voter trust, which was earned through the state's commitment to transparency during the transition and first tabulation of an RCV election.¹⁷ Election officials can face unique challenges with voter education based on their jurisdiction's demographic makeup, available resources, and controlling state and local election laws. Their strategies cover a broad spectrum of outreach efforts to maximize the number of voters reached.

COSTS INVOLVED IN VOTER EDUCATION

How to cover the costs of voter education varies. Some jurisdictions can budget for major public voter education campaigns; others rely on ingenuity, creativity, and longstanding local relationships to reach their constituents on minimal budgets.

When two North Carolina municipalities, Cary and Hendersonville, opted to participate in a statewide RCV pilot program in 2007, both operated on an extremely limited budget. With no dedicated outreach budget, officials in the two towns ran small-scale but highly creative campaigns using free media, in-house design work, and community events to engage voters.

In contrast, some jurisdictions have large budgets dedicated to voter outreach campaigns. Minneapolis spent about 30% of its \$365,000 RCV budget on outreach. This funding covered the production of printed materials, hosting community conferences, and conducting mock elections, which is an effective tactic for familiarizing voters with the RCV ballot. Santa Fe, NM, likewise invested heavily in voter education by designing bilingual and culturally tailored materials to reach its Hispanic and Indigenous populations. Officials visited high schools, hosted community sessions, and appeared on local radio and social media to explain the system and answer questions directly.

Officials across RCV jurisdictions stressed that voter and candidate education never ends; it is an annually recurring cost. Multnomah County spent \$83,000 on educational materials in 2024, its first year of RCV implementation. That budget significantly decreased in 2025 to \$3,000, and county officials anticipate this to be the approximate annual cost moving forward.

Many election offices already budget for ongoing education to address voter turnover, low information contests, and an irregular election schedule (such as special contests conducted using different systems). According to those who have already implemented RCV in their jurisdictions, educating voters on RCV eventually merges with ongoing engagement efforts instead of remaining a separate burden.

APPROACHES TO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Election officials use multiple education channels during the transition to RCV, adapting strategies to suit the unique needs of their communities. In doing so, they demonstrate remarkable creativity and commitment when they are tasked with implementing a new system. Some notable examples include:

- Hendersonville election officials went to senior centers, local libraries, town halls, and recreational departments, bringing with them pamphlets and explainers, designed in-house, on their new equipment, ballot designs, and process of tabulation.
- Minneapolis and Hendersonville staged mock elections, encouraging their communities to vote on favorite ice cream flavors or candy bars. The election administrators found that voters felt more confident in the results when they could visualize the path of a ranked-choice voting tabulation.¹⁸
- New York City hosted over 600 online and in-person training sessions with volunteers and outside organizations willing to help educate communities on the transition to RCV. Election officials also designed and printed educational materials in 18 languages.
- Portland produced informational videos and other visual materials targeted for underrepresented communities.
- Santa Fe focused on in-person outreach in Hispanic-majority neighborhoods, using mailers, local radio stations, and office hours to communicate with the public.

Media outlets and political candidates are critical stakeholders in voter education. Election officials proactively engage both to ensure accuracy and prevent misinformation. Typically, this involves sharing basic information about how RCV ballots and tabulation work. Minneapolis, for instance, sent weekly emails with RCV information to candidates and distributed informational packets to both media outlets and candidates ahead of the start of voting. Officials also hosted webinars for the media, public, and candidates, and some election officials appeared in the media themselves to build trust and consistency of message.

VOTER CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN RCV ELECTIONS

Some election officials worry that RCV's complexity can challenge voters' confidence in the elections process. At a time when trust is waning,¹⁹ sweeping reforms can exacerbate skepticism if they are poorly implemented. RCV's intricacies—ballot exhaustion, tabulation, and multiround counting—can lead to misunderstandings and distrust among voters.²⁰ Election administrators can counter these challenges through transparency, education, and open communication. In addition to educating voters about how to correctly fill out the new ballot format, election officials also teach voters how votes are counted and reported under RCV in an effort to build trust in the results. For example, on top of hosting mock elections and mailing detailed guides to all households, Minneapolis also circulated a postelection survey to better understand voters' experience with the new system and to identify opportunities for improvement in future elections.

Policymakers should provide election officials with adequate time to implement major changes and consider how public engagement and education is one of the most time intensive aspects of the transition process. With sufficient planning, election officials can prepare and carry out efforts targeted at bolstering voter confidence in the new system. Still, some skepticism and conspiracy theories persist, even after well-executed rollouts.

Impacts on Election Administration

- Adopting RCV requires additional training protocols for election workers.
- Most jurisdictions can retain their existing hardware but must plan for software updates and new ballot designs.
- Results reporting procedures must be redesigned to balance speed, clarity, and transparency.
- Election officials should plan for collaboration with outside experts and advocacy groups during the RCV transition.

Adopting RCV affects every core aspect of election administration, including training, voting technology, ballot design, and tabulation and results reporting.

Administrators may also rely on or need to manage third-party partners, depending on local capacity.

TRAINING

Virtually any change to election administration practices requires updates to staff and poll worker training. The scope and intensity of additional RCV training varies widely by jurisdiction. In Arlington, officials used in-person simulations to help staff grasp how the vote transfers under RCV work. Minneapolis created modular training tools and developed a unified message for both election office staff and candidates. Santa Fe and Portland hired dedicated staff and consultants to handle RCV-specific operations and voter inquiries. Election officials said that staff and poll workers adapted quickly and that RCV training did not significantly complicate existing processes. Still, ongoing training will be required so that new workers can administer an RCV election and explain it confidently to voters.

TECHNOLOGY AND BALLOTS

Implementing ranked choice voting requires technological and logistical changes involving voting equipment, ballot design, and tabulation and reporting procedures. Transitioning to RCV usually does not require new hardware, as many systems can already handle RCV ballots; however, software, ballot layout, and back-end processes often require adaptations. Policymakers must evaluate how existing election laws interact with RCV technology and administrative processes.

In Minneapolis, early adoption revealed a gap in software readiness. The absence of RCV software forced administrators to develop a spreadsheet-based tabulation system. Although intended as a stopgap fix, this onerous manual process has persisted for nearly 15 years due to policymakers' failure to adopt new state statutes that would allow for a more appropriate solution. Similarly, a Virginia law delayed the adoption of integrated tabulation software, leaving Arlington officials with tight deadlines and uncertainty before its first RCV election. In Portland, where RCV implementation was part of a broad set of governmental reforms, the use of separate ballots for first-past-the-post and RCV contests created logistical issues and additional costs. At the same time, using separate ballots offered operational advantages, such as streamlined processing and clearer reporting of results. Across these cases, election officials emphasized that while existing voting systems can often be used, ballot layout constraints—especially in multiseat contests—require careful planning.

RESULTS REPORTING

Election officials and lawmakers must consider how to report the results of RCV elections effectively and expediently. This issue, while far less complex than financial or technical considerations, is vitally important for transparency and public trust. Unlike traditional first-past-the-post elections, RCV races can take longer to finalize because votes are redistributed across multiple rounds until a majority winner emerges. The unorthodox nature of this to most of the American public cannot be overstated, nor can its potential to fuel distrust.

Attempting to report vote transfers between rounds during unofficial tallies can confuse the public and media. Consequently, Arlington and Minneapolis now release only first-choice results initially, and they do not publish full results until tabulation is complete. Portland has experimented with interim reporting and graphics to make the process more transparent. Santa Fe officials stressed that clear communication is crucial, particularly when results are close, to avoid reinforcing public suspicion about RCV.

Despite operational hurdles, jurisdictions report that RCV becomes more manageable over time. Santa Fe officials noted that once the tabulation algorithm is configured, the technical process is straightforward. Since adopting RCV in 2009, Minneapolis has reduced its tabulation time from two weeks to a single day.

THIRD-PARTY INVOLVEMENT

The complexity and resource-intensive nature of RCV transitions have led many jurisdictions to rely on third-party organizations for support with voter education, staff training, and technical infrastructure. Among them are RCV advocacy groups such as FairVote²¹ and the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center (RCVRC),²² professional election consultants, and communications or media firms—each bringing distinct expertise to the table. When aligned with the needs of election officials, these organizations can meaningfully enhance a jurisdiction's capacity to implement RCV successfully.

Portland offers a model for productive collaboration between election officials and outside partners. City and county officials partnered with RCVRC to navigate procedural changes and to customize staff training, especially around tabulation software. Portland also engaged local artists to produce comics and videos explaining how RCV ballots work and how they are counted. Portland election officials even trained the local 3-1-1 service on answering frequently asked questions about RCV.

Not all jurisdictions, however, found third-party partners aligned with their operational needs. Some third parties lacked sufficient technical expertise, offering limited help on statutory compliance, statistical standards for elimination rounds, or tie-breaking protocols. When Arlington implemented RCV, election officials discovered that some partners did not understand the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA).¹ This legislation allows citizens, including military personnel, living outside of the country to register and vote absentee in elections. During the implementation process, it was unclear how applying ranked-choice voting would affect these voters. Arlington officials consulted with peers in Minneapolis, whose prior RCV implementation experience provided better guidance for serving UOCAVA voters.

Although third-party organizations can bring valuable support, their effectiveness depends heavily on how well they understand and adapt to the detailed, jurisdiction-specific challenges election officials face. The daily demands on election offices are expansive, covering everything from voter services and ballot processing to managing public inquiries and handling legal compliance issues. When implementing a new electoral system is added into this mix, election administrators find it most useful to have outside help from those who already understand the complexities of their role, including how each decision impacts workflows, staffing, timelines, and public perceptions. The Portland example highlights how successful third-party involvement stemmed from RCVRC's ability to engage with those realities. The center also provided resources that did not duplicate officials' efforts but instead extended internal capacity in a meaningful way.

As the use of ranked-choice voting expands, so does the opportunity for third-party groups to deepen their utility by investing in procedural knowledge, jurisdictional specificity, and sustained partnerships. With the right approach, these collaborations can evolve from helpful supplements into cornerstones of successful RCV administration.

¹ As of publication, six states (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina) allow ranked ballots for military or overseas voters to reduce the burdens of administering and participating in multiple elections, in the case a runoff is needed. See Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center, *Why Adopt RCV?*, n.d. Available at: <https://www.rcvresources.org/why-adopt-rcv>.

ADVICE FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS FROM ELECTION OFFICIALS

Election officials offered a variety of practical advice for peers preparing to implement RCV. First, expect the initial election cycle to be resource-intensive, especially for public communication and staffing. Second, designate clear internal leadership for RCV implementation, whether through a dedicated staffer or through temporary consultants, to coordinate logistics and messaging. Third, treat voter education and outreach as a permanent investment rather than a one-time project. Last, leverage peer networks. Many jurisdictions found that advocacy groups pushing RCV, while well-intentioned, lacked answers to operational questions. Direct communication with other election officials proved far more valuable.

Ranked choice voting does not upend election administration processes, but it changes several key components. With appropriate planning, most jurisdictions find RCV soon becomes just another part of their election operation. Still the initial transition requires concerted coordinating, clear communication, and a deep understanding of both technology and community dynamics.

Conclusion

As voters and policymakers consider electoral reforms like RCV, they should consult election administrators early to understand their jurisdiction's unique challenges. Transitioning to RCV is achievable with appropriate time, planning, and resources. While alternative electoral systems may impact voter turnout, representation, or polarization, transitioning to RCV can also strain resources, increase the risk of errors, and temporarily weaken voter confidence until election administrators gain experience in the new process. These effects depend on unique local circumstances. Regardless, election officials remain confident, as always, in their ability to deliver accurate, secure, and trusted elections whatever the system.

NOTES

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