

RANKED CHOICE VOTING

TABULATION CAUCUS WORKSHOP TOOLKIT



ARLINGTON
VIRGINIA



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THE BASICS

Background information for facilitator.

What is Ranked Choice Voting?

Ranked choice voting (RCV) is a voting method in which voters rank candidates in order of preference (1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice). Ranking multiple candidates allows you to still have a choice in who gets elected even if your top choice candidate does not win.

Why is Arlington Implementing Ranked Choice Voting?

The Virginia General Assembly passed a bill to amend Code of Virginia § 24.2-673.1 in July 2020 to allow localities to implement ranked choice voting in elections of members of a county board of supervisors or a city council. In fall 2021, the Arlington Electoral Board conducted public engagement with a Q&A session, a “mock election,” and held a joint work session with the County Board to discuss this method of voting. In December 2022, the Arlington County Board adopted the use of ranked choice voting for the June 20, 2023 County Board primary election, making Arlington the first locality in Virginia to implement ranked choice voting.

Benefits of using RCV include:

- Candidates have to appeal to people who might initially vote for someone else, improving civility in campaigns.
- Ensures candidates with the broadest support win the election.
- Supports more diverse candidates.

How RCV Ballots are Counted

All 1st choice votes are counted. If no candidates receive the required number of votes to win, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and ballots for that candidate are transferred to the voter's next choice. This process continues until candidates have enough votes to win.

If your 1st choice candidate is eliminated, your vote is transferred to your 2nd choice candidate. If your 2nd choice candidate is eliminated, your vote is then transferred to your 3rd choice candidate.

TABULATION CAUCUS WORKSHOP TOOLKIT

About this Toolkit

This Toolkit is a guide for community members to conduct workshops to help explain ranked choice voting tabulation.

The facilitator should have a very strong understanding of ranked choice voting tabulation and be able to explain terms like election threshold and surplus fractions. The facilitator should also be able to calculate thresholds and surplus fractions based on the size and choices of the group. Participants should have a basic understanding of what ranked choice voting is and how to mark a ballot.

The workshop is designed to be run with large groups of participants (20+) and takes 15 to 20 minutes to complete. It is ideally suited for large gatherings in auditoriums/community centers.

Activity Summary (20+ Participants):

Participants will mark ballots. They will then divide into different groups based on their first choice. The facilitator will begin the tabulation and round process eliminating choices and asking those participants to move to the next choice on their ballot. This process is repeated until winners can be determined.

Learning Objectives

Participants will learn about marking a RCV ballot and tabulation.

Supplies Needed:

Included in Toolkit:

- Unmarked ballot
- 6 Ice Cream Signs
- RCV Formulas & Terms Sheet
- Blank Tally Sheet

Not included:

- Calculator
- Display Board (dry erase/chalk board)
- Dry erase markers/chalk
- Stickers
- Pens
- Tape

Step-by-step Instructions

1. Hang or place ice cream signs (6 total) around the room.
2. Distribute ballots and pens to participants. This can be done as participants enter the event.
3. Count the number of participants.
4. Calculate your threshold (see RCV Formula sheet on page 6). Explain the threshold to participants and write it down on your board.
5. Ask the participants to divide into groups next to the corresponding ice cream sign for the first ranked ice cream on their ballots.
6. Count and record the number of participants in each ice cream group.
7. Ask the participants in the lowest rank ice cream to go to their next ranked ice cream choice.
8. Count and record the number in each group.
9. Repeat steps 7 & 8 until an ice cream reaches the threshold amount. If no ice cream reaches the threshold, the last remaining ice cream(s) will be declared the winner.

If allowing 2 ice creams to be declared winners, you will need to potentially calculate a surplus fraction. If only 1 ice cream will be declared a winner, disregard the surplus fraction.

Scenario 1 – 2 ice creams reach the threshold at the same time

- Both ice creams will be declared the winner.

Scenario 2 – 1 ice cream exceeds the threshold, and you will need to calculate a surplus fraction

- If an ice cream exceeds the threshold, you will need to calculate a surplus fraction.
- $SF = \text{Votes for Ice Cream} - \text{Threshold} / \text{Votes for Ice Cream}$
- Give each participant in the highest a sticker to denote they are now a fraction vote.
- Divide them into their next choice ranks.
- Count again remembering to add some participants as fractions until a second ice cream reaches the threshold or only 1 ice cream remains.

Scenario 3 – No ice creams reach the threshold

- If no ice cream reaches the threshold, the last remaining ice creams will be declared the winner.

RCV Formulas & Terms Sheet

Election Threshold = $\frac{\text{\# of ballots cast for office}}{\text{\# of candidates to be elected} + 1} + 1$
(rounded down to a whole number)

Surplus Fraction* = $\frac{\text{Candidate's total \# of votes} - \text{Threshold}}{\text{Candidate's total \# of votes}}$

*The surplus fraction is only used in 2+ seat races.

Active Candidate

Candidate who has not been defeated during a round-by-round vote count.

Active Ballot

Ballot that counts toward an active candidate in the current round of counting.

Inactive Ballot

Ballot that can no longer be counted due to the ballot having no active candidates in the round.

Skipped Ranking

A voter has left a ranking unassigned but ranks a candidate at a subsequent ranking.

Rank up to 3 candidates. Mark no more than 1 oval in each column.			
	1	2	3
Candidate A	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Candidate B	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Candidate C	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Candidate D	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Tally Sheet

Election Threshold:_____

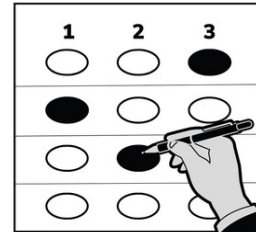
Surplus Fraction (only use for 2+ seat race):_____

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6
Vanilla						
Pistachio						
Chocolate						
Cookies & Cream						
Vegan Matcha						
Rocky Road						

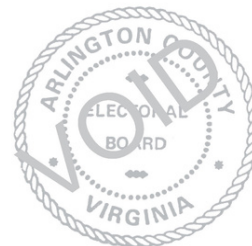
DEMO BALLOT

Ranked Choice Voting Instructions

- Rank up to 3 candidates in the order of your choice.
- Select your 1st choice by filling in the oval under the number 1 to the right of the candidate's name.
- To select a 2nd choice, fill in the oval under the number 2 to the right of the candidate's name.
- To select a 3rd choice, fill in the oval under the number 3 to the right of the candidate's name.
- If you make a mistake or need assistance, ask an election officer.



Arlington's Top Ice Cream Flavors Two Flavors will win. Mark no more than 1 oval in each column			
	1	2	3
Vanilla	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pistachio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chocolate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cookies & Cream	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vegan Matcha	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rocky Road	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Vanilla

Pistachio

Chocolate

**Cookies
& Cream**

**Vegan
Matcha**

Rocky Road