

Ranked Choice Voting Implementation Fact Sheet

Arlington Office of Voter Registration & Elections

Background

This fact sheet was compiled at the request of the Arlington Electoral Board to explore how ranked-choice voting (RCV) can be implemented in Arlington County following the passage of [HB 506](#) in the 2020 Regular Legislative Session. This bill amended Va Code § [15.2-705](#) and § [15.2-705.1](#) which allows the Arlington County Board to adopt an ordinance to elect County Board members using RCV.

Legal & Policy Steps

- VA Code § 15.2-705 allows RCV. Implementation requires County Board to adopt by passing a local ordinance.
- County Board Needs to Advertise and Pass Ordinance.
- State Board of Elections (SBE) Must Adopt or Decline to Adopt
 - [Ballot Standards](#) (aka Ballot Form)
 - Tabulation Rules—Single Vote Winner (SVW)
 - Tabulation Rules—Multi Vote Winner (MVW)
 - Guidelines to Report Results
 - Certify RCV Voting Machines and Tabulation Software
- Arlington Electoral Board & Office drafts procedures to transfer ballots & tabulate.

Technical Requirements

- Arlington's County Board race requires tabulation for both SVW & MVW races.
- Arlington uses 2 Ballot Layout & Tabulation Processes.
 - Unysin OpenElect Voting System**
 - Partially Compliant:**
 - Up to 3 Rankings
 - Grid Layout
 - SVW Only
 - Central Tabulation
 - MyVaBallot**
 - Not Compliant:**
 - No Layout Options
 - Tabulated by Hand -
 - No Cast Vote Record (CVR) created
- Results are reported to SBE using State system.
 - Not Compliant**

Gaps & Recommendations

There are both policy and technical gaps that the Arlington Office of Elections recommends resolving before implementing RCV.

Legal & Policy Gaps

- SBE must decide if they will exercise their option to pass regulations for tabulating votes in rounds for SVW and MVW scenarios.

Recommendation: We recommend SBE exercises this option. Specifically, we recommend SBE address potential conflicts with code § [24.2-673](#) and § [24.2-535](#). These sections state that the winner shall be “candidates having highest number of votes” in a General or Special Election or “plurality” of votes in a Primary election.

- SBE must decide if they will exercise their option to draft ballot standards per § [24.2-613](#).

Recommendation: We recommend SBE exercise this option to have consistent ballot standards for the Commonwealth and remain in compliance with § [24.2-613](#).

- SBE must decide how results will be reported.
- SBE must notify Arlington about the certification status of current systems specifically in regards to conducting an election using RCV.
- Tabulation policies must allow for a CVR to be manually created for ballots unable to be read by a scanner. This CVR must be combined with one created by voting machines.

Technology Gaps

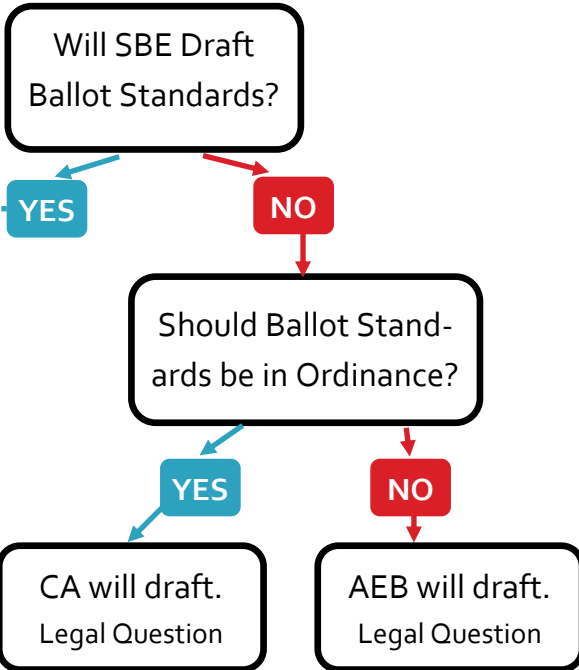
Arlington County will be responsible for funding all changes.

- Arlington must have a voting system that can tabulate a MVW race.
- MyVABallot must accommodate Ballot Standards for RCV ballots.
- If results from multiple rounds must be reported using the State System, SBE must make technical changes to the State reporting system.
- Tabulation software needs to allow for a CVR created for hand counted ballots to be combined with the CVR created by voting machines.

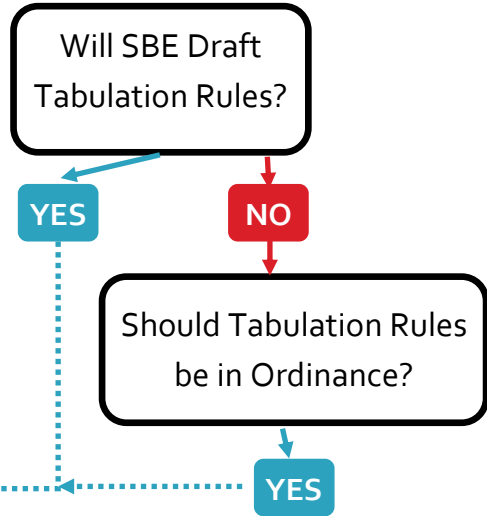
Scenarios

With each gap there are several scenarios.

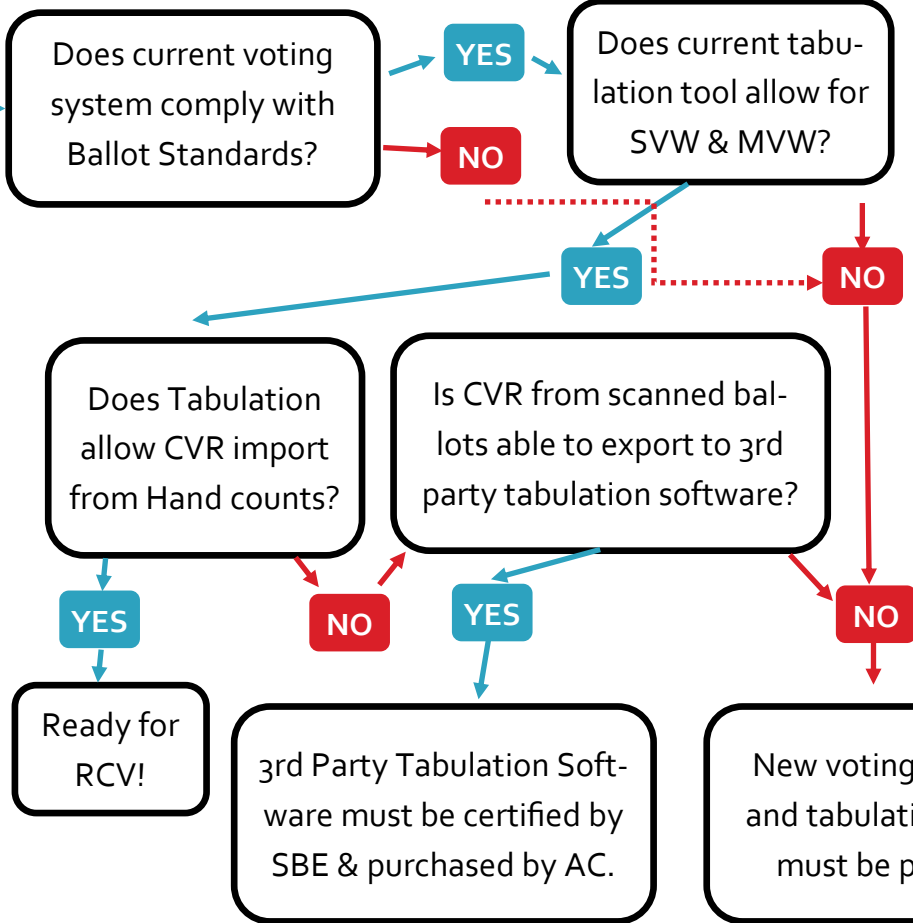
Ballot Standards



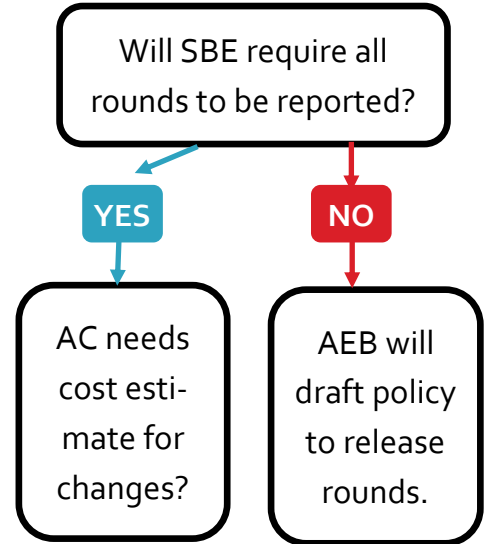
Tabulation Rules



Technology Gaps



Results Reporting



Definitions & Acronyms

AEB	Arlington Electoral Board
Ballot Standards	Also known as Ballot Form. These are regulations for ballot design and layout.
CVR	Cast Vote Record - Data file that shows how ballots are marked. Tabulation is run from this file.
MVW	Multi Vote Winner - Vote for 2 or more races
RCV	Ranked Choice Voting
SBE	State Board of Elections
SVW	Single Vote Winner - Vote for 1 race

Additional Resources

<https://www.opavote.com/methods/san-francisco-rcv-rules>
<https://www.opavote.com/methods/instant-runoff-voting>
<https://www.opavote.com/methods/single-transferable-vote#minneapolis-stv>

Minneapolis, MN

<https://vote.minneapolismn.gov/ranked-choice-voting/history/>

Alameda County

<https://www.acgov.org/rov/rcv/>

<https://www.acvote.org/voting/rcv>

https://www.fairvote.org/bay_area_election_analysis

<https://my.lwv.org/california/oakland/voters-toolbox/ranked-choice-voting>

Maine

<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/ranked-choice-voting-state-presidential-election/story?id=72780965>

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/maine-becomes-first-state-to-use-ranked-choice-voting-in-a-presidential-election-11604062812>

<https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming/rankedchoicefaq.html>

Rank Choice Voting across the US

https://www.fairvote.org/where_is_ranked_choice_voting_used