

The Case for Ranked Choice Voting

1. The 2010 Governor's Election

Lincoln Chafee	36.1%
John Robitaille	33.6%
Frank Caprio	23.1%
Ken Block	6.5%
Others	0.8%

2. The 2002 Democratic Gubernatorial Primary

Myrth York	39.2%
Sheldon Whitehouse	38.4%
Antonio Pires	22.4%

Ranked Choice Voting

Basic Rules:

Voters can list as many candidates as they wish, placing them in rank order. Voters will only make one trip to the polls, but their lower-ranking choices will allow for several rounds of vote counting.

1. In the first round, all the first choice ballots are counted. If one candidate wins a majority, there is a winner and the election is finished.
2. If there is no majority winner in the first round there is a second round. In the second round, the candidate with the lowest total is taken off the ballot. The ballots listing the low candidate as the first choice are then redistributed according those voters' second choice. If that produces a majority, there is a winner and the election is finished.
3. If there is no majority winner in the second round, the remaining candidate with the lowest vote total is taken off the ballot. The ballots listing that candidate as the highest (remaining) choice are then redistributed according to those voters' next highest choice. If that produces a majority, there is a winner and the election is finished.
4. This process repeats until one candidate has won a majority.

Sample Election
3 Candidates: Alice, Beatrice and Clara
27 Voters

10 Ballots

First Choice	Alice
Second Choice	Beatrice
Third Choice	Clara

9 Ballots

First Choice	Beatrice
Second Choice	Clara
Third Choice	Alice

6 Ballots

First Choice	Clara
Second Choice	Beatrice
Third Choice	Alice

2 Ballots

First Choice	Clara
Second Choice	Alice
Third Choice	Beatrice

FIRST ROUND

Alice	$10 + 0 + 0 + 0 = 10 = 37.0\%$
Beatrice	$0 + 9 + 0 + 0 = 9 = 33.3\%$
Clara	$0 + 0 + 6 + 2 = 8 = 30.0\%$

Because no candidate won a majority, there will need to be another round. Clara has the low total. She is eliminated from the election. The voters who chose her first (Green and Yellow) will have their second choice votes redistributed to Alice and Beatrice.

SECOND ROUND

Alice	$10 + 0 + 0 + 2 = 12 = 44.4\%$
Beatrice	$0 + 9 + 6 + 0 = 15 = 55.6\%$

Beatrice wins a majority in the second round (15 of 27 votes).