

RCV in action

1. California

While RCV is not used throughout California, it is thriving in some of the state's largest cities. San Francisco, for example, adopted RCV in 2002. This eliminated the need for a succeeding runoff election, saving taxpayer dollars, boosting turnout, and allowing individuals to vote with both their heart and their head. Women and minority candidates have had more success than ever running for office in San Francisco. The 2018 mayoral election, which saw the city elect its first female African-American mayor. In the years since San Francisco implemented RCV, Berkeley, Oakland, and municipalities throughout the state have passed it, too.⁴

2. Maine

While RCV in California has been implemented only in municipalities, Maine has implemented it state-wide, the only state to do so. In 2016, Maine's voters approved using RCV in most elections. While the Maine legislature attempted to override the ballot measure by passing legislation to repeal RCV, Maine's voters would not accept this. In June 2018, RCV was on the ballot once again and won. In the November 2018 election RCV proved pivotal in ensuring that all candidates attained majority support in their respective races. Even though Maine's RCV policy has faced legal challenges at both the state and local level, it has routinely proven constitutional. Instead, the state legislature has expanded RCV for application in presidential elections, revealing the popularity of the policy.⁵

3. Massachusetts

While we are working to implement RCV across the state, a handful of municipalities have already adopted the voting system. Amherst and Easthampton recently approved the measure, and will implement it over the coming years.⁶ Cambridge, meanwhile, has used the system since the 1940s! RCV has helped ensure that historically underrepresented groups, from women to African Americans, have a seat on the Cambridge City Council. In doing so, the system further reveals that 99% of voters routinely see their first, second, or third choice win the election. The case of Cambridge makes it clear: we must bring RCV to Massachusetts this fall.⁷

⁴ <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/7/24/20700007/maine-san-francisco-ranked-choice-voting>

⁵ <https://www.arnoldventures.org/stories/maine-rcv-timeline/>

⁶ <https://www.fairvote.org/where-is-ranked-choice-voting-used>

⁷ https://www.fairvote.org/spotlight_cambridge#history_rcv_cambridge