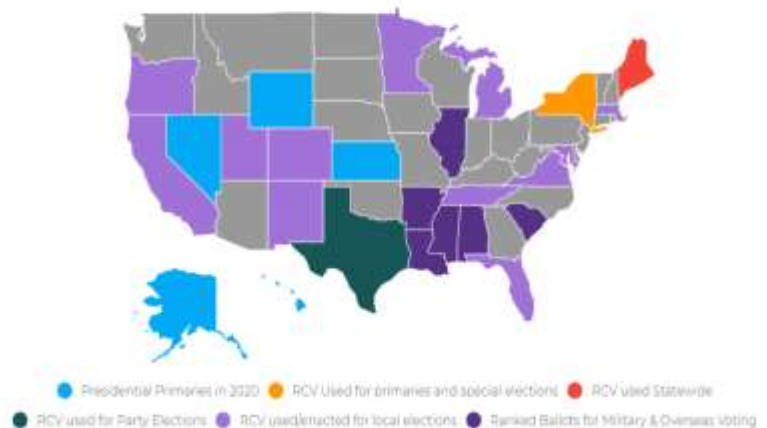


## RCV Across the USA

*How prevalent is ranked-choice voting across the country?*

Currently, 20 states use ranked-choice voting (RCV) in some form. The scale and scope of RCV within each state varies. For example, RCV is used statewide in Maine, but is used only under a very narrow set of circumstances in southern states like Arkansas and Alabama. RCV is used most often in municipal elections. Cities like San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Cambridge use RCV to elect local officials like mayors and city councilors. Other states, like Hawaii and Wyoming, use RCV in their Democratic primary elections.<sup>1</sup>

### Where Ranked Choice Voting is Used



Source: [FairVote](https://www.fairvote.org/where-is-ranked-choice-voting-used)

Yet RCV is not only used in governmental elections. Universities in our own backyard, such as Harvard, MIT, and Northeastern, use RCV in student government elections, along with more than 50 institutions of higher learning nationwide, strengthening the voice of more than 700,000 students.<sup>2</sup>

Alongside universities, numerous private organizations and corporations, from the American Chemical Society to the National Organization for Women, use RCV to elect their executive boards. Even the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences uses RCV to decide the Best Picture winner at the Oscars.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fairvote.org/where-is-ranked-choice-voting-used>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fairvote.org/rcv-in-campus-elections>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fairvote.org/rcv-in-private-organizations-and-corporations#oscar-votes>

## *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.<sup>4</sup>

### 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.<sup>5</sup>

### 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>

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

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

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

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.fairvote.org/spotlight\\_cambridge#history\\_rcv\\_cambridge](https://www.fairvote.org/spotlight_cambridge#history_rcv_cambridge)