

The LWN NYC Position & History

Ranked Choice Voting – Adopted in 2010, updated in 2019

The Position

LWN NYC's new position

- **We support ranked-choice voting (in certain circumstances known as instant runoff voting) in all local NYC elections, including primaries, specials, and general elections.**
- Voters should have the option to rank at least three and at most six candidates for a given office.
- The counting should cease to reallocate votes once a candidate receives over 50% of the current round's vote.
- RCV/IRV should happen in lieu of any head-to-head runoffs that might otherwise have occurred.
- Adequate funding should be provided for training, equipment, staff, and voter education.

LWN NYC's reasoning

- Voters in other cities and states that use RCV appear to understand and like the system, and cities like Santa Fe reported increased voter confidence in the quality of the result. Voters are also able to express their preferences more fully than they would with the existing system.
- Observers in other cities with RCV report reduced negative campaigning.
- While we strongly recommend ample funding for logistical and educational needs, RCV has been run in Maine on a shoestring budget, so it is cost effective, particularly in comparison to the 2009 and 2013 Public Advocate regular runoffs, which cost \$13 million with single-digit voter turnout.
- There is no clear effect on voter turnout, suggesting the lack of a negative consequence on that front.
- There is modest evidence for RCV leading to an increase in elected officials that are female or people of color.
- RCV has been implemented successfully in many situations, including major U.S. cities, one U.S. state, and also countries like Australia. Cambridge, MA, has been using this system since 1941.