

Hello All,

I have received several questions from voters about Ranked Choice Voting, so I thought I would take a moment to explain a bit about how it works. Please keep in mind that as election officials, we are not allowed to discuss specific candidates. At various training sessions, we have been encouraged to use Disney characters or ice cream flavors, instead. Silly, perhaps but it allows us to explain things without violating any election laws, so... I am not really up on my Disney characters, so I will use ice cream flavors.

Say, for example that the election coming up is to determine people's favorite flavor. There are 5 initial candidates: Strawberry, Peach, Mint, Butter Pecan and Maple Walnut. To make the numbers easy, assume there are 100 votes cast. In order to gain a clear majority, a flavor would have to get 51 votes. For the sake of this example, assume that in the first round the voting is as follows:

Strawberry	30 votes
Peach	25 votes
Mint	21 votes
Butter Pecan	17 votes
Maple Walnut	7 votes
TOTAL:	100 votes

ROUND ONE RESULTS

No flavor has a clear majority, which means that the ranked choice voting will take effect. The one flavor with the fewest number of votes will be taken out of the running. In this example, only the people who voted for Maple Walnut will have their 2nd choice votes used for the next round. For everyone else, their first choice remains their first choice.

Assume that all the people whose 1st choice was Maple Walnut put Butter Pecan as their 2nd choice. This would mean that after the second round, the votes stand as follows:

Strawberry	30 votes	
Peach	25 votes	
Butter Pecan	24 votes	(BP received all of the seven 2 nd choice votes of the maple walnut people)
Mint	21 votes	
TOTAL:	100 votes	

ROUND TWO RESULTS

After this round, there still is no clear majority of votes, which means that another round takes place. Again, the flavor with the fewest number of votes has its 2nd choice votes used for the next round; everyone else keeps their first choice as their first choice. So, Mint is now out of the running and those people will have their 2nd choice counted. Assume that all of the people who voted for Mint as their 1st choice, put Strawberry as their 2nd choice. This means that after the next round, the vote stands as follows:

Strawberry	51 votes (having received all 21 of the Mint voters' 2 nd choice)
Peach	25 votes
Butter Pecan	24 votes
TOTAL:	100 votes

ROUND THREE RESULTS

After this round, there is a clear majority, with Strawberry having 51 votes, so the ranked choice stops and the voting is over. One thing to keep in mind is that your 1st choice remains your 1st choice for as long as your candidate stays in the running. A candidate is only out of the running if they have fewer votes than everyone else. In this rather silly example, those who voted for Strawberry, Peach and Butter Pecan always had their 1st choice vote used in the tally. It was only Maple Walnut and Mint voters who ultimately had their 2nd choices used.

I hope this helps clarify a bit. As a voter, you are not required to indicate a 2nd or 3rd choice if you do not want to. Your first choice will be used as long as that candidate remains in the running.