

Exit Surveys: Voters Evaluate Ranked Choice Voting

Exit polls have been conducted by local scholars and civic groups following first uses of ranked choice voting (RCV) in several cities and statewide in Maine. These elections include:

- **San Francisco, CA** First used RCV in November 2004 in elections for city council. *Survey conducted by San Francisco State University.*
- **Takoma Park, MD:** First used RCV in January 2007 in electing a city council vacancy
- **Cary, NC:** Used RCV in October 2007 pilot in elections for city council and mayor. *Survey conducted by North Carolina State University.*
- **Portland, ME:** First used RCV in November 2011 in electing its mayor
- **Santa Fe, NM:** First used RCV in March 2018 in electing mayor and city council. *Survey developed and overseen by University of New Mexico.*
- **Maine:** First used RCV in 2018 for state and federal primary elections and for federal general elections. *Bangor Daily News survey in Nov. 2018 advised by Colby College.*

The following chart provides a summary of exit surveys showing that voters both understand and like instant runoff voting by overwhelming majorities.

	Understand RCV well or fairly well	Prefer RCV to old system	Knew how to rank candidates before coming to vote
San Francisco ⁽¹⁾	87%	61%	69%
Takoma Park	88%	89%	84%
Cary ⁽²⁾	95%	73%	76%
Portland	94%	N/A ⁽³⁾	69%
Santa Fe	84%	71%	N/A ⁽⁴⁾
Maine	78%	67%	N/A ⁽⁴⁾

(1) Subsequent surveys in San Francisco in 2005 and 2006 showed continued high levels of support

(2) Cary used RCV in one-time pilot use. A 2008 town survey confirmed these positive findings.

(3) Prior to 2011, Portland did not elect its mayor.

(4) The Santa Fe and Maine exit polls did not include this question.

Sources:

San Francisco (2004): http://archive.fairvote.org/sfrcv/SFSU-PRI_RCV_final_report_June_30.pdf

San Francisco (2005): <http://instantrunoff.com/assets/SFRCVExitPoll2005.htm>

Cary: <http://instantrunoff.com/assets/IRVCaryExitPoll2007.pdf>

Portland: <http://instantrunoff.com/assets/NewFolder-2/Portland-ME-Survey-11-3-11.pdf>

Santa Fe: <https://fairvote.box.com/v/SantaFeExitPoll> (additional data available on request)

Maine: https://www.fairvote.org/maine_voters_want_to_keep_rcv (more data available on request)

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