

Ranked Choice Voting: Increasing Women's Political Power

The Challenge

As of May 2022, the United States ranks below 69 other countries in terms of women's representation at the national level. Women make up 51% of the U.S.'s population but only 27% of Congress. This is because women face barriers that are built into the system we use to elect our representatives. To strengthen women's political power, we need better voting rules and systems. Ranked choice voting (RCV) will improve gender balance by creating an environment for women to run and win in higher numbers.

The Solution

Ranked choice voting elects more women. Women make up 43% of mayors and 50% of all council members in the 39 cities that have recently used ranked choice voting. In comparison, women make up 31% of mayors and 41% of all council members in the 100 largest U.S. cities.

How RCV Removes Barriers for Women

- **Civil Campaigns**

The negativity of campaigns is one of the biggest turn-offs for many women wanting to run for office. With RCV, candidates also compete for second-choice votes from their opponents' supporters, which lessens the incentive to run negative campaigns.

- **Eliminates "Vote Splitting" and Strategic Voting**

Multiple women, especially women of color, can run under RCV without hurting each other's chances. Voters can sincerely rank candidates in order of preference without worrying about which candidates are more or less likely to win.

- **Saves Money**

We know women candidates are underfunded. RCV allows cities to replace primary elections with a single general election, which means a shorter and less-expensive campaign season for women candidates. RCV also eliminates the need for expensive attack ads.

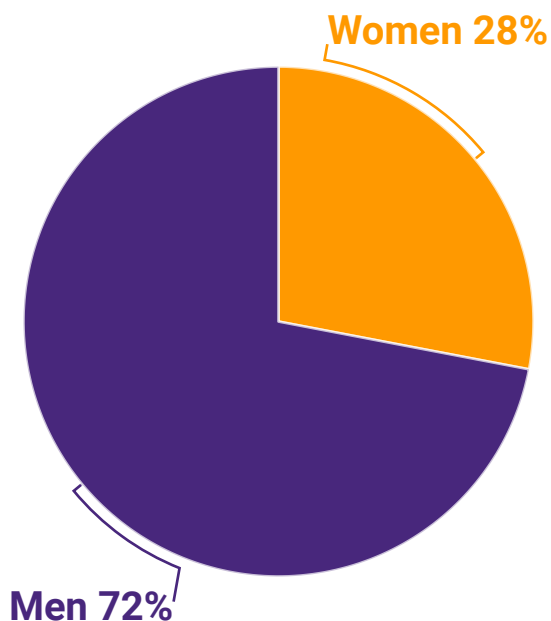
**Ranked choice voting removes barriers to
elect more women and people of color.**

Ranked Choice Voting: Increasing Women's Political Power

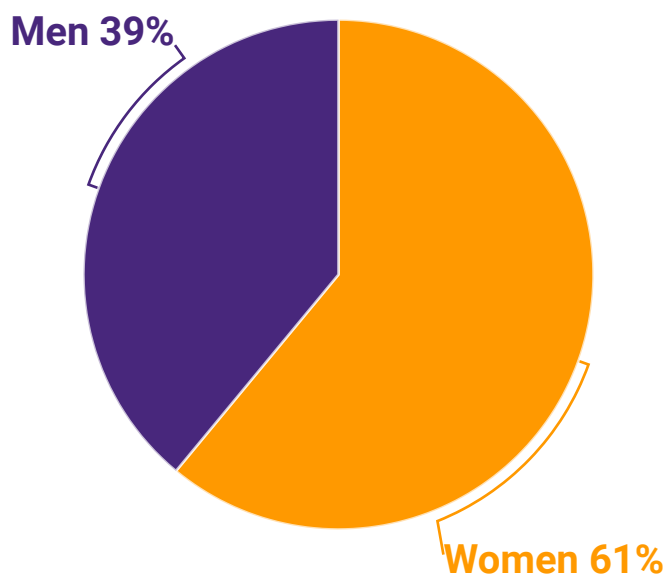
Case Study: New York City

In June 2021, New York City used RCV for its municipal primary, which allowed women, especially women of color, to run and win in record numbers. RCV, combined with NYC's existing campaign public finance program and the work of [political leadership incubators](#), removed systemic barriers and helped level the playing field for women candidates.

Pre 2021 Elections



Post 2021 Elections



After the November 2021 election, 31 women won, composing 61% of the council. This was **the first time in NYC Council history** that women composed the majority of the council. Of those 31 women, **26 won ranked choice voting primaries.**

2022 Councilmember Demographics

