IRV Voting

Best of Both Worlds

Multiple Rounds
(Called "50% +1." Means "more than half.")
Eliminate candidate with fewest votes. Then revote. Repeat until one person has more than half of all votes.

Accurate Voting
(Ensures winner has more than 50% support.)

Plurality Voting
Person with most votes on first round is winner, even if they have only 10% of the total votes in a 12 person race.

Fast Voting

Instant Runoff Voting
Voters cast *one* ballot with all their choices listed in order. Then they can leave.
Counting process eliminates lowest candidates and redistributes those ballots by next choice. Repeated until one pile has more than half of all ballots. That person is then the winner.

Fast and Accurate Voting

This document explains the entire election process, including the nomination process, candidate vetting, sample ballots and a counting table set-up. It also includes tally sheets and instructions for the counters. If you wish to use this system but lack confidence in these instructions, you may use the help of volunteers who are more "the type" to get it. (Print pages 4, 5 & 6 and show it to prospective volunteers. They will tell you if they get it.)

Using this method, it is possible for voters to vote for Precinct Officers, County Delegates and State Delegates and be gone in about a half hour if they need to. Or, they could choose to stay longer and vet the candidates with more questions before casting their ballots.

The rest of this document shows all the materials I used to run all the races at the same time using IRV. You may modify as you desire. This is but an example.

Check-in, Ballot Distribution and Nominations . . . . . Page 2
Candidate Vetting and Casting Ballots . . . . . Page 3
Counting The Votes . . . . . Pages 4 & 5
Appendix: Tally Sheets You May Use . . . . . Pages 6 - 17 (you may only need 3 of them)

These were made with Corel WordPerfect, not Microsoft Word. If you want that file, I'll be happy to share.

Questions and suggestions are welcomed at politics4dwight@gmail.com

Dwight Stringham

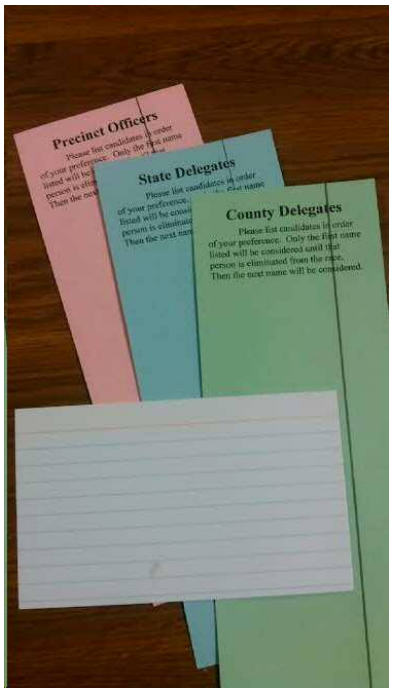
Check-in, Ballot Distribution and Nominations

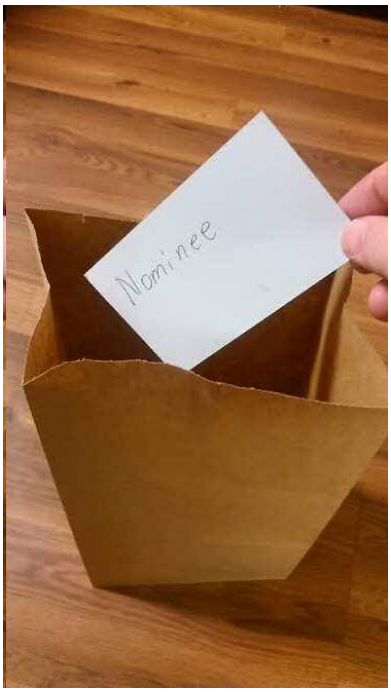
Upon check-in, all eligible voters are given three color coded ballots – one for each race.

In my example, all precinct officers run in a single race. The person with the most votes is chair, second most votes is vice chair, etc. Winning candidates may choose to take a lesser office and the next ranking candidate takes the higher office.

If you expect a large turn-out, having more than one check-in station plus a trouble table is highly recommended for speed. We used four. ("Stations" can be people sitting next to each other at the same table.) Each station's check-in list can be copied to a master list or electronic device later.

In addition to the ballots, 3X5 cards are made available for making nominations. More nominating cards can be given as requested. People may "file for office" by submitting their own name or they may nominate someone else by writing that name on the card. Nomination cards are put in a bag.





The ballots shown were made by cutting school supply sentence strips into thirds. I used that because we usually have many nominees and these are longer than index cards. Index cards can work fine for smaller turn-outs. The only requirement is that all the names can be listed.

The printed wording is instructions for the voter. It says. "Please list candidates in order of your preference. Only the first name listed will be considered until that person is eliminated from the race. Then the next name will be considered."

**** People accepting elective office MUST provide contact information for political candidates and party officials to contact them! This means a phone number and hopefully an email address. They *will* be replaced if they are not contact-able or are unresponsive.

Candidate Vetting and Casting Ballots

After agenda items such as opening prayer, pledge of allegiance, and the reading of a party platform (either State or County) have been completed, it's time to read nominations from the cards in the bag. Nominees may decline any or all of the races available.

As people accept nominations, they are given a poster on which to write their names and they stand in a row at the front of the room. (Half-size poster boards available in the school supply section of many stores.) Candidates wishing more votes will write their name large enough for all to see.

Since all three races are running at the same time, staple a voided ballot to their poster for each race they are willing to accept. This is a great visual for voters to know which names can be written on which ballot. (If a voter puts a name on a wrong ballot, that name can simply be skipped over. No worries.) Candidates can run in one, two, or all three races.

Candidate speeches and questions from voters are now in order. When a voter has heard enough, they can fill out their ballots and drop them in the ballot box. Some will vote quickly because they need to hurry home. Others will want to take longer and ask more questions. That's the beauty of this system. It fits the needs of many different voters.

A popsicle stick makes a great template for the slot in a ballot box, by the way.

Voters should understand that there is no "weight" given to anyone else on their list while their top choice is still in the race. (It is not like sports rankings.) If their first choice is eliminated, then their second choice is the only one considered until that person is eliminated. Etc. If they don't list all names, that's fine. It will just be as though they chose not to vote anymore once their listed candidates are eliminated.

The top vote-getter in the Precinct race is the Chair. Second highest is Vice-Chair and third and fourth are Secretary and Treasurer. Anyone can defer down. For example a candidate with enough votes to be Chair or Vice-Chair may not want to conduct meetings, they can defer down to Secretary while the next in line rises to Chair or Vice-Chair.

Delegates are taken in order until all assigned slots are filled. The next two are alternates.

Counting The Votes

(Suggestion! Print a copy or two of this page and the next for each counting station.)

Make sure all volunteers counting ballots understand that they are NOT to make any marks on the ballots!

If you have enough volunteers, you can have three counting tables, one for each race.

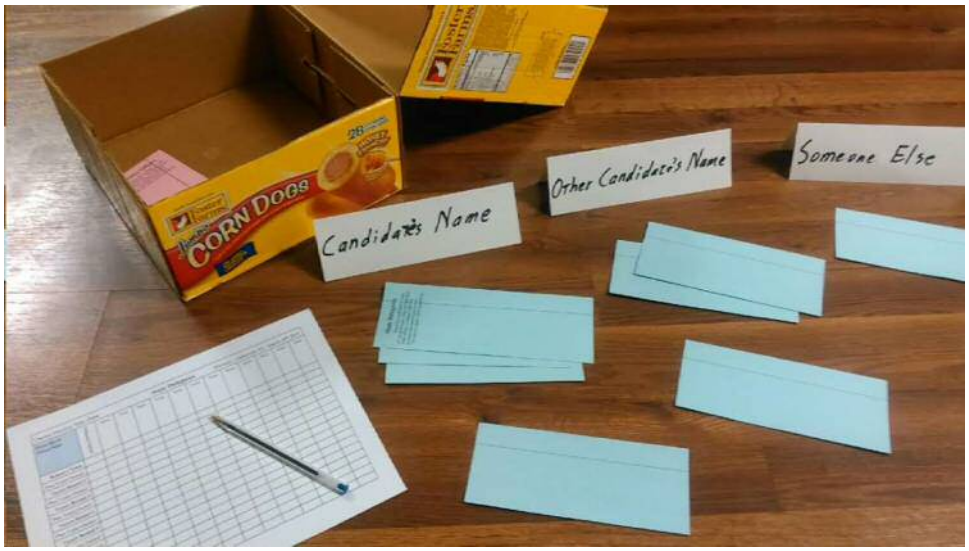
At this point, look at a copy of the tally sheets included in this document. The rest of these instructions make much more sense if you are looking at the tally sheet.

You will only need three pages – one for each race – if you have 10 candidates or fewer. I used a shaded background in one cell of the tally sheet to match the color of the ballot.

(In the spirit of being prepared, my tally sheets have twelve pages – four for each race. This just expands the chart to allow for up to 24 candidates and 17 Rounds. I prefer to print them back to back)

Names of candidates go at the top of each column. If there are more than 12 candidates, a second tally sheet can be set to the right of the first so you can pretend it's 24 columns wide. The back side of the sheet is only used if more than nine rounds of counting are needed.

Sort all ballots into piles based on the top choice listed. If the voter made any mistakes such as writing a name of someone not running, or if it is illegible, then only that name is voided, not the whole ballot. Always go in order of valid, legible listings regardless of what else is there.



Count how many votes each candidate has and write the total on the tally sheet in the row for "Round 1."

Determine the lowest vote getter. Write "Done" under their total on the tally sheet. That would be on the second row labeled "Plus votes gained."

It may be that two or three piles can all be identified as "done" and redistributed on this first round if it is obvious that they only have a few votes out of many cast. That won't change the result.

Take the ballots from the eliminated candidate and look at the next choice on those ballots. Place these ballots in a pile next to the existing pile for that new choice candidate. Count how many votes each remaining candidate "gained" from this new pile. Write that number gained in the second row of the tally sheet. That is the row labeled "Plus Votes Gained."

Add the "Round 1" votes to the "Plus Votes Gained" votes and put the total in the next row that is labeled "Round 2." When this total is written, the original pile and the gained pile may be consolidated.

Repeat until done

Now just repeat until you get to the end.

- See which total in "Round 2" is the lowest.
- Record that they are "Done."
- Redistribute those ballots according to the next name listed.
- Write the "gained votes" on line 4.
- Add "Round 2" plus "gained" and put the total in "Round 3."
- Consolidate the piles again.
- Start over, moving down the sheet to subsequent rounds.

When you have only two piles left, the larger of the two is the winner, the chair, or the first delegate etc. The other is the vice-chair, the second delegate, etc. The person you eliminated out of three piles is the secretary, third delegate, etc.

Ties

If two candidates are tied for being the next one eliminated, first see if it makes a difference in office holding. If these are the ninth and tenth ranked candidates vying for four offices, it makes no difference. You may mark them both as "done" and redistribute both piles in a single round.

If tied candidates are within the range of making a difference in holding office, then a coin flip may be used to break the tie. Decide on a neutral rule such as "candidate in the leftmost column of the tally sheet" is heads while the one in the rightmost column is tails. Or "first in the alphabet is heads," etc.

Other Issues

If a "next choice" is a candidate that has already been eliminated, then simply move to the next name that is still in the race.

If a ballot runs out of valid names because the voter didn't list them all, it becomes an "Exhausted ballot" and is set aside. Continue with other ballots as normal.

Caucus Election Tally Sheet **Precinct Officers** Precinct: _____ Date: _____

First Sheet Front Side	Exhausted Ballots	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name
Round 1 Votes													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 2**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 3**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 4**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 5**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 6**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 7**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 8**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 9**													

Caucus Election Tally Sheet **Precinct Officers** Precinct: _____ Date: _____

First Sheet Back Side (Copy totals from round 9 on front side of sheet.)	Exhausted Ballots	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name
Round 9 Votes													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 10**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 11**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 12**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 13**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 14**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 15**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 16**													
Plus Votes Gained													
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Caucus Election Tally Sheet **County Delegates** Precinct: _____ Date: _____

First Sheet Front Side	Exhausted Ballots	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name
Round 1 Votes													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 2**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 3**													
Plus Votes Gained													
Equals **Round 4**													
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Caucus Election Tally Sheet **State Delegates** Precinct: _____ Date: _____

First Sheet Front Side	Exhausted Ballots	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name
Round 1 Votes													
Plus Votes Gained													
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