



Prepare Yourself

In order to launch a successful IRV campaign, one of the most important things is to start of by knowing where you are going in the campaign. This means understanding the problem, the solution, what your goals are and how you plan to get there.

1. Organize Yourself and Your Thoughts

- **Budget your time and find some help (ask FairVote)!** If you can, build a core of enthusiastic advocates. Even one or two will help you divide this initial labor, and will later on lead to a wider sense of ownership over the campaign.
- **Record everything.** Develop a way to keep track of contacts, supporters, notes from meetings and conversations, campaign strategy, etc. Also use FairVote and the Yahoo! IRV Group for resources and helpful information.

2. Gather Basic Information

What elected body or positions are the target for reform?

- Executive or legislative? _____
- How are the elections and districts currently configured? (Multi-member, single-member, etc.) _____
- Do the targeted seats use a primary, a plurality requirement or a runoff?

Find out about voting equipment. See the **Voting Equipment** page for what you need to know and how to go about gathering a little information.

3. Build the Argument for Reform

- **Studying the problems** before you begin your campaign will help you understand how to sell the benefits of reform.
- **When thinking about elections, here are some things to consider:**
 - Negative campaigning – do campaigns focus less on issues and more on personal attacks?
 - Minority rule and the “spoiler effect” – do the winners end up representing less than 50% of the voters?
 - Low voter turnout – are voters not engaged in elections?
 - Vacancies – are they filled by appointment instead of special election? Do many people run, thus making a weak plurality winner likely?
 - Primaries – do they exist? If so, do candidates win with less than a majority, thus creating weaker party picks (if it is partisan)?
 - Runoffs – do they exist? If so, how much do they cost taxpayers? How much do they cost candidates? How is the voter turnout on the runoff election?
 - Underrepresentation – are some voting groups shut out? By geography? By party or interest group? By race? By resources?



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4. Understand Legal Aspects

- The law as it stands: What legal restrictions are there at the local level? Does your community have the authority to decide how its elections take place?
- Gate-keepers of reform: Who can make the decision to change the law? Are there multiple layers of decision-makers; for instance, must a legislative body decide to put reform on the ballot, and let the voters decide from there? Or, if local law is superceded by law higher up, how would this higher up law be changed?
- What power do I have?: Many communities allow voters to place questions directly on the ballot through the initiative process. Is this an option? Is it the best option? Is it something to fall back on?

5. Design your Campaign Strategy

The purpose of any strategy is to allow you to achieve your objectives in the most efficient way possible. Here is a sample campaign strategy skeleton, to give you an idea.

Goals

- Short-term / partial victories: Recommendation by a charter commission, passage of a non-binding resolution or referendum, etc.
- Short-term goal: Have the City Council place a referendum on the ballot.
- Intermediate goal: Pass a binding referendum to adopt IRV.
- Intermediate goal: Ensure logistical feasibility of implementation.
- Long-term goal: Adopt instant runoff voting (IRV) in your city or county.

Organizational Considerations

- Resources: \$500; three core leaders; six occasional volunteers...
- Group-strengthening goals: Raise \$3,000; build leadership group to six leaders and identify many more of supporters

Constituents, Allies, and Opponents

- Who cares enough to help / whose problem is it? Ethnic and political minority groups with historically poor representation; idealistic college students with free time; challenger candidates looking for an issue to champion...
 - What do they gain / what risks do they take? Groups gain representation; college students gain campaign experience; challenger candidates gain political traction
 - Into what groups are they organized? Neighborhood / civic groups
- Who are your opponents? One "old guard" City Councilor; one columnist; a skeptical school organization
 - What will my victory cost them? The traditional way of voting; potentially, less influence on politics.
 - What will they do to oppose you? Spend money, negative ads and columns

Targets

- Primary target(s): Registrar of Voters for implementation; registered voters; City/County policymakers; a relevant committee or commission
- Secondary target(s): Local academics and elections administrators; City Councilors' neighbors, friends and loved ones; League of Women Voters, business / civic leaders.

Tactics

- Highlight testimony from academics and an official Commission; publicize support from political candidates, officials, business / civic leaders; educate voters, collect petitions; hold public hearings and voting demonstrations; canvass your neighborhood; get positive op-eds and letters-to-the-editor published.