Budget Levels

A co-op that helped develop Fair Share Voting lets each voter rank **budget levels** for *some* items.

A budget level needs to get the **base** number of votes. It gets one if a ballot offers to share the cost up to that level or a higher level. cost / base = 1 share = 1 vote
You only pay up to a level you voted for and can afford.

The item with the weakest top level loses that level. Any money your ballot had offered to it moves down your ballot to your highest ranks that lack your support. This repeats until the top level of each item is fully funded by its supporters. Thus fair shares and backup ranks select a set of winners with **more supporters**.

An interest group must *prove*, "This cost is a high priority and within our budget."

A group with 100 members set our **base** number at 25 votes.[5] My first choice got just enough votes, so my ballot paid 4% of the cost. 100% / 25 votes = 4%.

My second choice lost; did it waste any of my power?

My third choice got 50 votes, so my ballot paid only 2% of the cost.* Was there any surplus? Did I waste much of my power by voting for this sure winner?

None. None. Not much.

More Merits of Fair Share Voting

- After all the discussion, a **quick** poll funds many items. It reduces **agenda effects** such as leaving no money for the last items or going into debt for them.
- It lets subgroups fund items **like federalism** does, but with less layering of laws, taxes and bureaucracy. And it funds a big group even if they are scattered.[6]
- Each big group controls just its share of the money. This reduces their means and motives for **fighting**. So they block rivals less, attract allies more. page 37. It makes becoming the plurality group less profitable.
- **Fairness builds trust** in spending by subgroups and raises support for it. It reduces relative spending at the extremes of individual and central control. Those can be dominated by billionaires and politicians.
- Multi-winner funding helps **voters feel hopeful.** It moves groups closer to common **ethical goals** like the Golden Rule,[7] "All men are created equal," and "Everyone holds a piece of the truth." (See page 57.)

Merits of FSV for an Elected Council

- FSV gives some power to reps in the opposition, so Electing one is more **effective**, less of a wasted vote.
- They can feed "starvation budgets" that hurt projects. This makes project management more **efficient**.
- A voter can see grants from his rep to each project, tax cut, or debt cut; then hold her **accountable**. Her ballot could reveal some **corruption**.

A Delicious Game

For our tabletop tally of **Fair Share Voting**

- We each get three 50¢ voting **cards** to buy treats.
- We decided an item needs modest support from 6 of us to prove it's a *shared* good worth shared funding. So the **finish line** marks the height of 6 cards, *and*
- You may put only one of your cards into a **column**.
- A costly item has several **columns** to fill. A column here holds $3, so a $6 item needs two full columns

Rule B lets you vote a 50¢ card, a 25¢ card half as tall, and a 75¢ card to boost your top choice (*without* inciting extreme high and low votes as point-voting ballots do.)

- When an item wins, the treasurer hides its cards, then **drops** any item that costs more than all the cards left.
- Then, one at a time, we drop the least popular item, the one with the lowest level of cards in its columns.
- **Move** your cards from a loser to your backup choices.
- **Stop** when we've paid up all items still in the game.

Only a few items can win, but all voters can win*!*

Rule C: An app shows the cards pop onto the columns.[2] It pops a tall card on the 1st column of each voter's fave. A shorter card pops onto each voter's next column, etc. After placing all of the cards, it drops the weakest column and restarts, rebuilding the remaining columns from zero[2]

Fair $hare Voting

A voter must prove: "A share of this item is a high priority and within my budget."

OVER >>>>

3. A Goal of Fair Share Voting: Give spending power to groups, in proportion to their voters.

So 60% of the voters spend 60% of the fund, not all of it. Your ballot's **share** from our fund lets you vote to pay your **shares** toward the costs of your favorite items.

Voting is easy: Simply rank your choices, like in RCV.*

Your ballot pays one share of the cost for each of its top ranks — as many of your top items as it can afford. A tally of all ballots drops the item with the fewest shares. This repeats until each remaining item gets full funding.[3]

Paying one share proves you feel the item is worth its cost and you can afford it in your high priorities.

Some Merits of Fair Share Voting, FSV

- **Each winner is a popular priority worth its cost**: To qualify for funding from our group's source, an item needs our "base number" of voters or more.
- **FSV is fair** to an item of any cost and to its voters: A ballot pays a costly share to vote for a costly item. cost / base = 1 share *e.g.* $100 / 25 ballots = $4 If more ballots divide a cost, each of them pays less.
- So, a ballot's money can help more low-cost items. This *motivates* each voter to give their top ranks to the items that give them **the most joy per dollar**.
- * **Ranked Choice Voting** in the free eBook ➥ points 1 and 3 on page 14, plus 1 on page 16.

Fair Shares and Majorities

If a majority controls all the money, the last item they buy is a *low priority*; so it adds little to their **happiness**. But FSV makes some money purchase *high priorities* of other big groups, adding more to their happiness.

In political terms: The total spending has a wider *base of support:* It appeals to more voters because more see their high priorities get funding.

In economic terms: The *social utility* of the money and winners tends to rise if we each allocate a share. Fair, cost-aware voting gives *more* voters *more* of what they want for the same cost = more satisfied voters. Shares also spread good opportunities and incentives.

Plurality rules let **surplus votes waste** a big group's power, as seen on page 20, and let rival items **split** it. The biggest groups often have the biggest risks.

FSV protects a majority's right to spend a majority of the fund. It does this by eliminating split votes, as did RCV, and surplus votes, as we'll soon see.

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◎ 2026 by Robert Blair Loring
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