# Everything you need to know about voting for our disabled whānau!

A few months from today, on Friday September 8, voting begins in the general election of 2023. Voting can be a confusing experience, so Firstport has a guide for our disabled whānau on where and how to get support.

## But first, what is the general election and how does it affect me?

The general election is a chance for you to vote for the people you want representing you and making decisions in parliament around laws and spending. Every New Zealander has two votes – one for a party and another for a candidate in their electorate.

What is an electorate?   
An electorate is an area of New Zealand you’re registered in, the electoral vote is for the candidate you want to represent your area in parliament. There are 72 electorates which are filled by candidates. These people become members of parliament (MP’s) that make up the New Zealand government.

If you are Māori descent you get to make the decision which electoral roll you want to be on; the Māori roll or the general roll. If you choose the Māori roll, you will vote for a candidate in the Māori electorate you live in. If you choose the general roll, you will vote for a candidate in the general electorate you live in.

What is a party vote? The party vote is for the group of politicians you want to support.

I would like to represent community.   
If you think you have what it takes to be a voice for disabled people in the electorate, you can apply for a grant from the million-dollar Election Access Fund, Te Tomokanga – Pūtea Whakatapoko Pōtitanga. This can cover extra disability-related costs that non-disabled people running for election do not have.

You have until Friday September 15 to lodge your individual electoral candidate nomination for 2023. [Guidelines for how to apply can be found on the Electoral Commission website in a range of formats including Braille.](https://elections.nz/getting-involved/election-access-fund/application-guidelines-in-alternate-formats/)

## How do I know if I can vote?

If you are 18 years or older, a New Zealand citizen, or a permanent resident and you have lived in New Zealand continuously for 12 months or more at some time in your life - You can enrol to vote!

## How do I enrol to vote?

There are a few ways to enrol and it’s super easy. We suggest enrolling early to avoid any queue’s when voting.

You’ll need an official form of identification - your New Zealand driver licence, New Zealand passport or a RealMe verified identity. [You can enrol or update your details without ID by completing another enrolment form online or have it mailed to you.](https://www.vote.nz/enrolling/enrol-or-update/other-ways-to-enrol/)

Can I get someone to help me sign my form?  
 You can always ask a support person, such as a friend or family member, to help you complete your enrolment, but **you must sign the form**. If you can’t complete the form your support person may act on your behalf and sign a different form. [Enrol or update on behalf of someone else form](https://www.vote.nz/assets/Forms/FORM_Enrol-or-update-on-behalf-of-someone-else.pdf)

I am part of the low vision/blind community can I get an accessible form?

[There is an accessible enrolment application form in large print online at vote.nz for people who need them.](https://www.vote.nz/assets/Accessible-formats/Large-print-PDF/Get-Ready-to-Vote-Enrolment-Form-updated-March-2023-18pt.pdf)

I don’t have access to the internet, how do I enrol?   
You can always visit your local voting booth and complete the form. Or ask for an enrolment form by Free texting your name and address to 3676, or ringing 0800 36 76 56 to get a form sent to you in the mail.

How do it return my form?   
[You can email your form to enrol@vote.nz](mailto:You%20can%20email%20your%20form%20to%20enrol@vote.nz) You can post your form to:

Electoral Commission

FREEPOST 2 ENROL

PO BOX 190

Wellington 6140

## Voting

When does voting start?   
You can vote from Saturday September 30 until election day 9pm on Saturday 14 October.

There will be multiple Voting places opened in your area. These locations will be published three weeks prior to election day. Vote.nz will publish these locations and it will be included and shared on Firstport.

1. Take a pen and EasyVote card.   
On your way to the voting place, take a pen and your EasyVote card. If you forget don’t worry, there will be pens available and you can still vote if you forget your Card. Your EasyVote Card just makes the process faster.

2. Listen to the directions.   
Election workers at your voting place will show you what to do and where to go. They are there to make your experience smooth and will also be managing the queues to give you more space to vote.

3. Vote in the general election.   
On your Voting paper, mark your party vote and electorate vote.

On your voting paper, place a tick by the name of the political party of your choice and a second a tick by the name of the candidate you would most like to represent your local area.

A friend, family member or electoral official can help you to read and mark your voting papers. Your support person can: go behind the voting screen with you, read out the words and information on the voting papers, and mark the voting papers for you if you ask them to.

There is an option to vote using a dictation service and you must register beforehand to use this service. Call 0800 028 028 and select option 1 to register.

4. Place your voting papers in the ballot boxes provided

5. Enjoy the rest of your day

I need help getting to a voting place. If you have trouble to get to a voting place there are different options available to make sure you can still vote.

If you’re in a rest home with no transport, your local Returning Officer will contact the manager of your rest home to arrange voting services.

If you can’t get to a voting place because you are in hospital, from 3 October, a friend or family member can bring you your voting papers.

[If you would like enrolment information in New Zealand Sign Language](https://www.vote.nz/enrolling/enrolment-in-your-language/enrolment-information-in-new-zealand-sign-language/) or [in other accessible formats check out Vote.nz](https://www.vote.nz/enrolling/get-help-to-enrol/enrolment-information-in-accessible-formats/)

I would like to chat to some candidates:

You have a chance get your voice heard at the Disability Election Forum. Ask candidates questions that matter most to you on Wednesday September 20 at 4pm. [To register visit IHC New Zealand and get your voice heard.](https://ihcnewzealand.eventsair.com/ihc-election-event-2023/electionevent/Site/Register)