

Is your election accessible?

2021 Municipal Elections Access Advisory Team Members:

- **Nancy Reid**, *Coalition of Persons with Disabilities (COD-NL)*
- **Pamela Dawe**, *Office of the Seniors' Advocate*
- **Jim Murphy & Frank Gough**, *Association for New Canadians (ANC)*
- **Rob McLennan**, *Stella's Circle*
- **Scott Matthews, PhD**, *Memorial University*

Kathleen Parewick, MUP, PhD

Community Collaboration & Development

30 June 2021

Framework & Sector Leadership

-
- Exercise the ***Vote by Mail*** option
 - Coordinated countdown
 - Resources and supports
 - Group purchasing
 - Advocacy



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Municipal Elections

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Municipal Elections

Municipal elections are subject to the [Municipal Elections Act](#).

Notice to federal public servants who fall under Part 7 of the *Public Service Employment Act*: Before you become a candidate, you must request and obtain permission from the Public Service Commission of Canada. Use this link: [I want to become a candidate - Canada.ca](#).

Municipal Election Forms (MEFs) are available online for the use of Returning Officers/municipalities for the purpose of administering municipal general elections. Members of the public who require specific forms (i.e. MEF-11 – Proxy Application) must obtain forms directly from a Returning Officer, as per the *Municipal Elections Act*.

MUNICIPAL ELECTION FORMS

[2021 Municipal Election Forms](#)

INFORMATION

[Municipal Elections at a Glance](#)



Our VBM Guidance

Vote By Mail

A Guide to Crafting Your 2021 VBM Regulations

15 June 2021
v.1



- *Barebones approach*
- *Legally-reviewed*
- *Templates (.doc)*
- *Guide & Tips*
- *Procurement help*

VBM Ballot Kit Purchasing support



First Name _____

Last Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Municipality _____

OVERVIEW	Price per unit	Total # of units	Total unit cost
White Secrecy Envelopes (for the completed ballot - white)			
Coloured Return Envelopes (to fit the secrecy envelope - yellow)			
Mailout Envelopes (to fit secrecy and return envelope for Canada Post)			
Sequentially Numbered Declaration Forms (yellow)			
Coloured Standard 8.5"x11" Paper (pink, green and/or blue)			
Population of your community:			
Estimated number of eligible voters:			
Total			

* Please contact us directly at info@municipalni.ca for additional details on pricing.

- *Materials sourcing*
- *Printing support options*
- *Templates (.doc)*



VBM Motions of Council

Final Step (ASAP - *July 5th*)

Motion # 3:

Be it resolved that the Town of [insert] adopt the *Town of [insert] Vote By Mail Regulations* and forward them to the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs for review and approval in writing pursuant to Sections 54 and 97 of the *Municipal Elections Act*."

VBM Regulation Package for MAPA Submission

Part 2

Appendix A

3A Appendices B & C (only)

Part 1

TOWN OF [insert]
MUNICIPAL ELECTION VOTE BY MAIL REGULATIONS

Pursuant to the Ministerial approval granted under Section 54(1) of the *Municipal Elections Act, SNL 2001, c. M-20.2* (hereinafter referred to as the "Act") as amended and all other enabling powers, the Town of [insert] has established the following MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS VOTE BY MAIL REGULATIONS.

Title

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Town of [insert] *Vote by Mail Regulations*.

Interpretation

2. Where used herein,

- a. "Returning Officer" shall mean the Town Clerk of the Town or such other person appointed in accordance with section 12(a) of the *Municipal Elections Act*;
- b. "Town" shall mean the Town of [insert]; and
- c. "Voter Kit" shall mean the package containing the documents listed in section 8 hereof.

3. Any capitalized term used but not defined herein shall have the meaning ascribed thereto in the Act.

4. Except where specified by these Regulations, Elections in the Town are held in accordance with the procedures and terms dictated by the Act, and the regulations, policies and forms promulgated thereunder.

5. Sections 26 and 27 of the Act shall not apply to an Election in the Town.

Returning Officer Responsibilities

6. The Returning Officer shall:

- a. Appoint in writing such election officials as may be required to conduct the Election, in accordance with section 12(a) of the Act;
- b. Establish and maintain a secure storage location into which Return Envelopes and Ballot Secrecy Envelopes are placed until the time specified for the counting of ballots;
- c. Establish and maintain until 8:00 p.m. on election day a minimum of one site for the deposit of Return Envelopes and Ballot Secrecy Envelopes;
- d. Establish and maintain a voter's list;
- e. Oversee the creation of the Voter Kit; and
- f. Perform such other duties and responsibilities as set out in the Act, these Regulations and procedures created hereunder.

7. The Returning Officer shall provide, in addition to the site required in section 6(c), a polling station or stations for the deposit of Return Envelopes and Ballot Secrecy Envelopes. Such additional sites shall be accessible only between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on election day and shall be supervised by elections officials as determined by the Returning Officer.

Voter Kit and Procedures

8. A Voter Kit shall be available to each eligible voter and shall contain the following:

1



APPENDIX A
VOTE BY MAIL PROCEDURES

REMINDER: This template has been compiled with small town circumstances in mind. As such, it assumes no electronic voting supports are in use. In the event your town's election plans entail a contractor using electronic means for voter identification, real-time voter list updating, ballot counting and tabulation, please consult them on your Vote By Mail Regulations, Procedures and Forms. As the one electronically-supported VBM process example in NL to date, you might also consult the City of St. John's. Their standing Municipal Elections legislation, including their Vote By Mail By-Law 1441, is available to view here:
<http://www.stjohns.ca/city-hall/municipal-election/voter-information/election-overview>

Similarly, if your town chooses to contract Canada Post for either or both of the distribution and return of your Voter Kits, the St. John's By-Law contains suitable legal references to their requirements.

Ballot Kit Distribution

1. The official Voter Kit will be distributed to the listed civic addresses of all voters on the Voters List no later than ten (10) days after the close of the nomination period.

Or

1. The official Voter Kit will be available for pick-up by all voters on the Voter List commencing no later than ten (10) days after the close of the nomination period [insert details, e.g. during regular working hours at the Town Offices and at such other times and locations as may be determined by the Returning Officer]. Remaining Voter Kit materials will be employed for in-person voting as of 8 a.m. on Election Day.

Optional addition:
Upon request to the Returning Officer, the official Voter Kit may also be distributed to the listed civic addresses of voters on the Voters List up to [insert deadline prior to Election Day].

Ballot Kit Return

2. Immediately upon receipt of the official Voter Kit, a voter may return their completed Kit to the Town Offices during regular working hours up until [insert time] on the day before Election Day.

3. [IF AVAILABLE] Voters will also have the option to drop their completed Voter Kit into the dropbox [insert details, e.g. at the Town Offices, 24 hours a day up to 8:00 p.m. on Election Day].

1



Municipality of _____ Municipal Election

Ballot – Councillors

Vote for up to _____ candidates.

#	Candidate
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Municipality of _____ Municipal Election

Ballot - Mayor

Vote for one candidate only.

#	Candidate	Mark an "X"
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Declaration Form

I, the undersigned, declare that I am a Canadian Citizen, 18 years of age or older, eligible to vote in this election, and that I have not already voted for any office on this ballot.

Signature _____

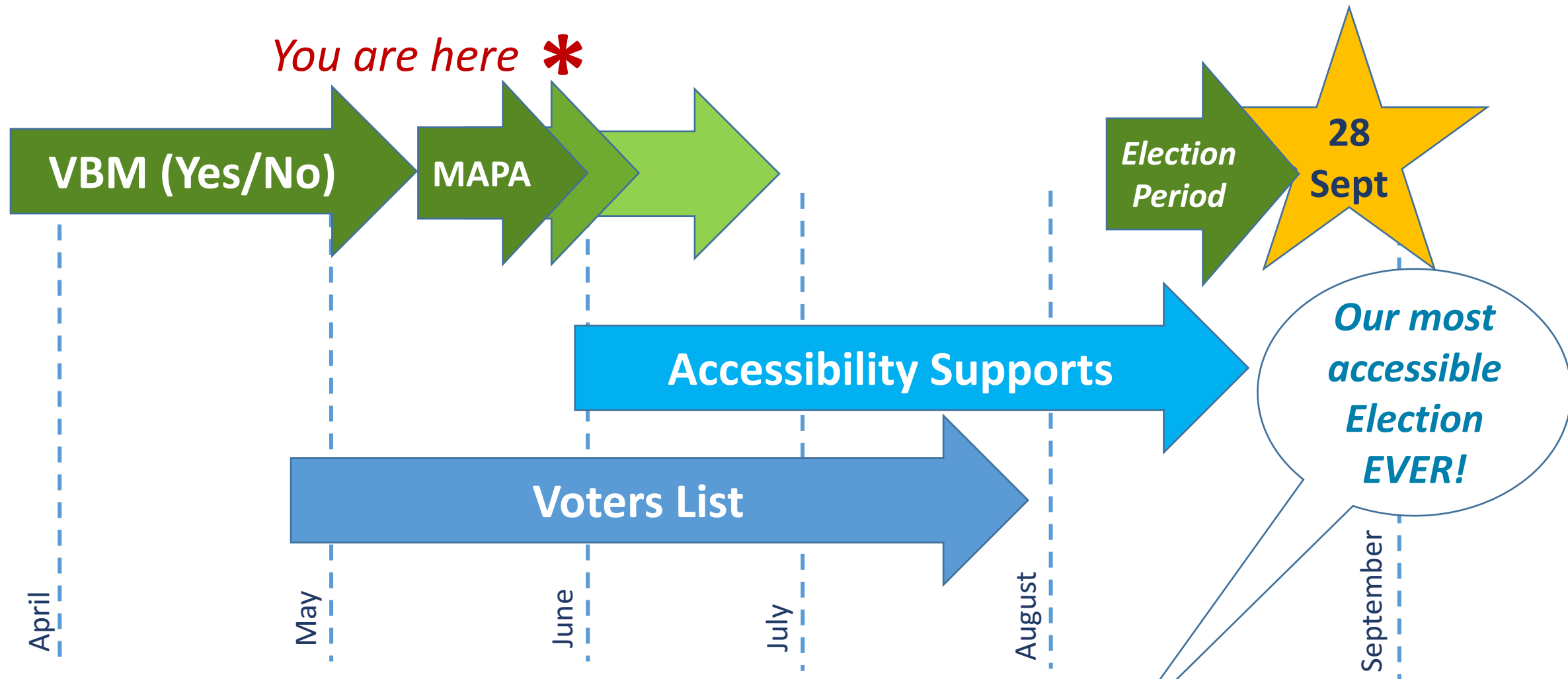
Print name _____

Serial numbering here

Regulations

Procedures

Ballot(s) &
Voter Declaration Form



Our Community Advisors

Huge thank-yous to...



OFFICE OF THE INFORMATION
AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR



Available electoral options by Alert-level

Election Measure	Possible in Alert Levels					Notes
	1*	2	3	4	5	
In-Person Voting	x	x	?			*Level 1 is considered a “new normal” following the vaccination of most of the population. No detailed public health measure guidance has been released for it as yet.
Mail-in Ballot	x	x	x	x	x	It is recommended that municipalities seek approval to use mail-in ballots to secure the best COVID-safe range of election options available in 2021.

We know how this story ended...

News Releases › Statement from the Chief Electoral Officer

Statement from the Chief Electoral Officer

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

February 11, 2021

Share this article:



The following is a statement from Newfoundland and Labrador's Chief Electoral Officer, Bruce Chaulk:

With the announcement of significant increases in COVID-19 cases this week, my office has experienced considerable operational impacts. Many election workers have resigned out of fear of interacting with the public on Election Day. We cannot hold traditional polls without the support of these people.

The large number of individuals currently in self-isolation is also a major concern. These recent cases of COVID-19 affect the most densely populated region of our province. This is worrisome, as we now have confirmed community spread. I am concerned for our election workers and for the electorate, in general.

Therefore, I am announcing that in-person voting in the following electoral districts will be postponed to a later date:

Access And Your Election

-
- **Signage** indicating **accessible path of travel** at poll station?
 - Staff aware of **service animal use rights**?
 - Ways to support **low-sighted voters**?
 - Plans for **long-term care facility** residents?
 - **Translated** voting materials?



Access.
Inclusion.
Choice.

Dimensions

- **Physical**
- **Awareness/Staff Education**
- **Barrier-specific approaches**
- **Place-based/Community outreach**
- **Literacy/Linguistic barriers**

Vote By Mail & Access

Flexibility

- From the time VBM Voter Kits are available through to the end of Election Day gives voters roughly a two week ***voting period*** to complete and return their completed ballot kits, with or without assistance.

This extra time makes it much easier to plan and support voters in need of accommodations

- In-person voting opportunities on Election Day at poll stations can also offer extra supports for persons who have trouble completing the Kit.

We have Access Advisors lined up to help you troubleshoot any access issues you may encounter.

Physical Access

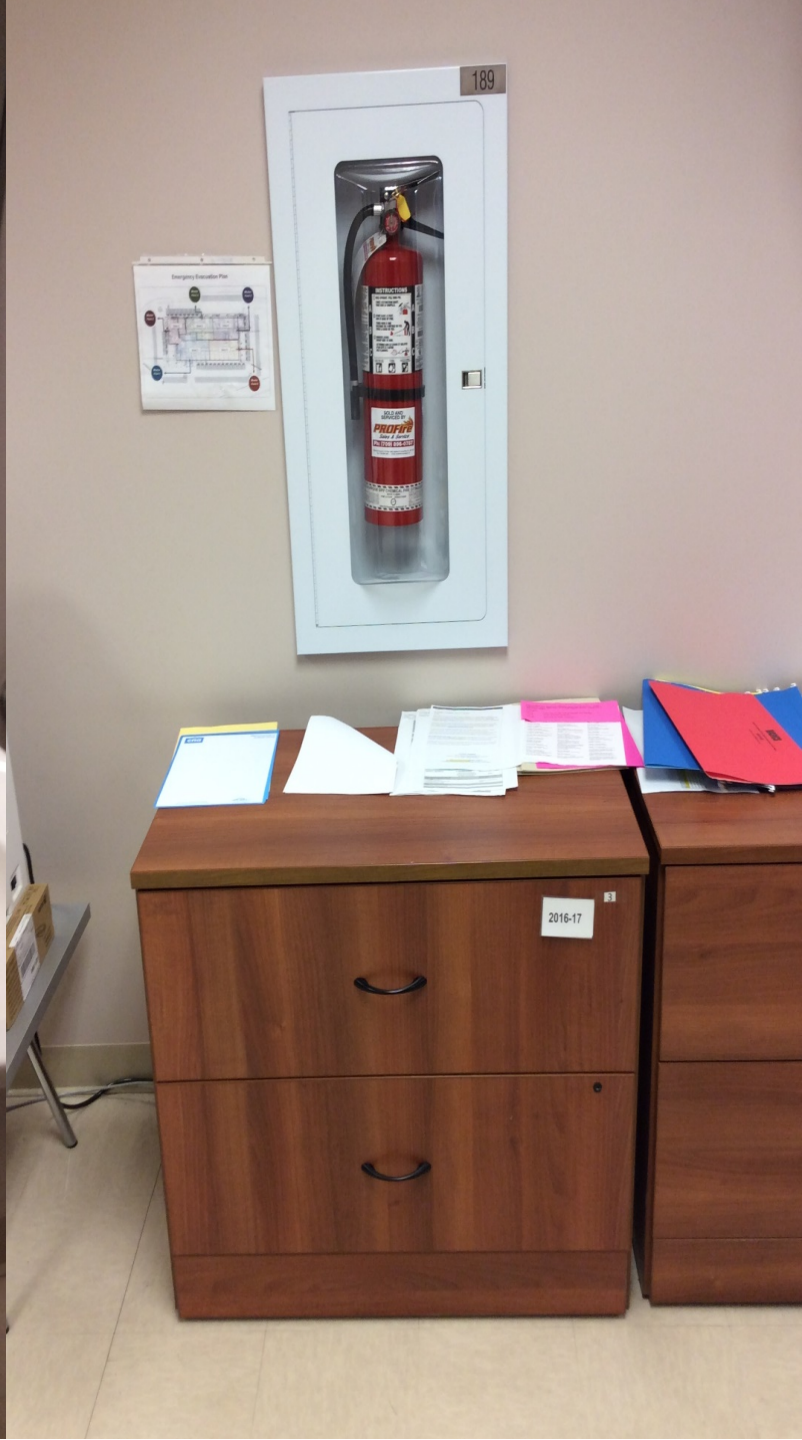
Considerations

- Doorways and open spaces
- Level entry and ramps
- Low tension and lever handles
- Paths of travel
- Colour contrast
- Counter height
- Reachable operators

.....and much more!



**Developing
an eye for
accessibility**



Universal Design NL



- *Building for Everyone*
- *Physical accessibility principles*
- *Excellent resources and guides*

<https://universaldesignnl.ca>

(link on the MNL Municipal Elections page)

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[Rick Hansen Foundation](#) ▶ [Become Accessible](#) ▶ [Accessibility Resources](#) ▶ [Accessibility Resources](#)

Welcome to our Accessibility Resources! Do you want to become more accessible? These are a few universal design guidelines on how to improve accessibility in your building or community. These guidelines are not intended as definitive rules since meaningful access should consider the unique space. To better understand your unique level of meaningful access, [contact an RHFAC Professional](#) to book a rating.

- *Ramps*
- *Doors*
- *Elevators*
- *Reception & Service Areas*

<https://www.rickhansen.com/become-accessible/accessibility-resources> (link on the MNL Municipal Elections page)

Access Self-Audit



Self-Audit Checklist - Election Polling Station/Other Locations

Activity	Yes	No	Action
1. Is directional signage accessible?			
2. Is parking accessible?			
3. Is there a level entry? (If no, proceed to number 4)			
4. Are access ramps appropriate and in good repair?			
5. Is the main entry clearly visible and well-lit?			
6. Is the entrance accessible? (ig. Can everyone use the same principal entrance without assistance?)			
7. Are there automated doors or push-button operated electronic doors for access? (Exterior)			

1

- *Signage?*
- *Parking?*
- *Ramps?*
- *Obstacle-free?*
- **17 items...**
- Anywhere your voters may be visiting



Don't forget dropboxes!

- *Vote by Mail provides more time and flexibility...*
- *More ways to return a ballot...*
- *More places to look at with an eye for accessibility*

Awareness & Staff Education

Considerations

- *Accessibility also includes awareness and understanding*
- *Language*
- *Knowledge of appropriate and necessary accommodations*
- *Service Animals*

Words with Dignity



WORDS with DIGNITY

Language is powerful. Be respectful.

Terms to use when referencing people with disabilities:

Use	Instead of
person with a disability person who has a disability people with disabilities	the disabled handicapped afflicted with suffering from special deformed differently abled
person with a mental illness person who accesses mental health services	mentally ill mental insane crazy
person who is deaf person who is late-deafened person who is hard of hearing	the deaf deaf mute hearing impaired
person with a developmental disability person with an intellectual disability	developmentally delayed
person who is blind person who is partially sighted	the blind the visually impaired
person with a learning disability	learning disabled
person with a mobility disability	physically challenged
person who uses a wheelchair	wheelchair bound confined to a wheelchair
accessible parking blue zone parking	disabled parking handicap parking
sport for athletes with disabilities	disabled sport
community of people with disabilities people	disabled community those people you people
person without a disability	normal

Remember:

Always put the person first. Avoid 'us' and 'them'. If in doubt, ask.



Disability Policy Office
ph 709-729-6279; 888-729-6279
tty 709-729-5000; 888-729-5440
disabilitypolicy@gov.nl.ca

- *Respectful language*
- *Person first*
- *“Us” or “Them”*
- *Include in poll materials and staff training*

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/files/disabilities-pdf-words-with-dignity.pdf>

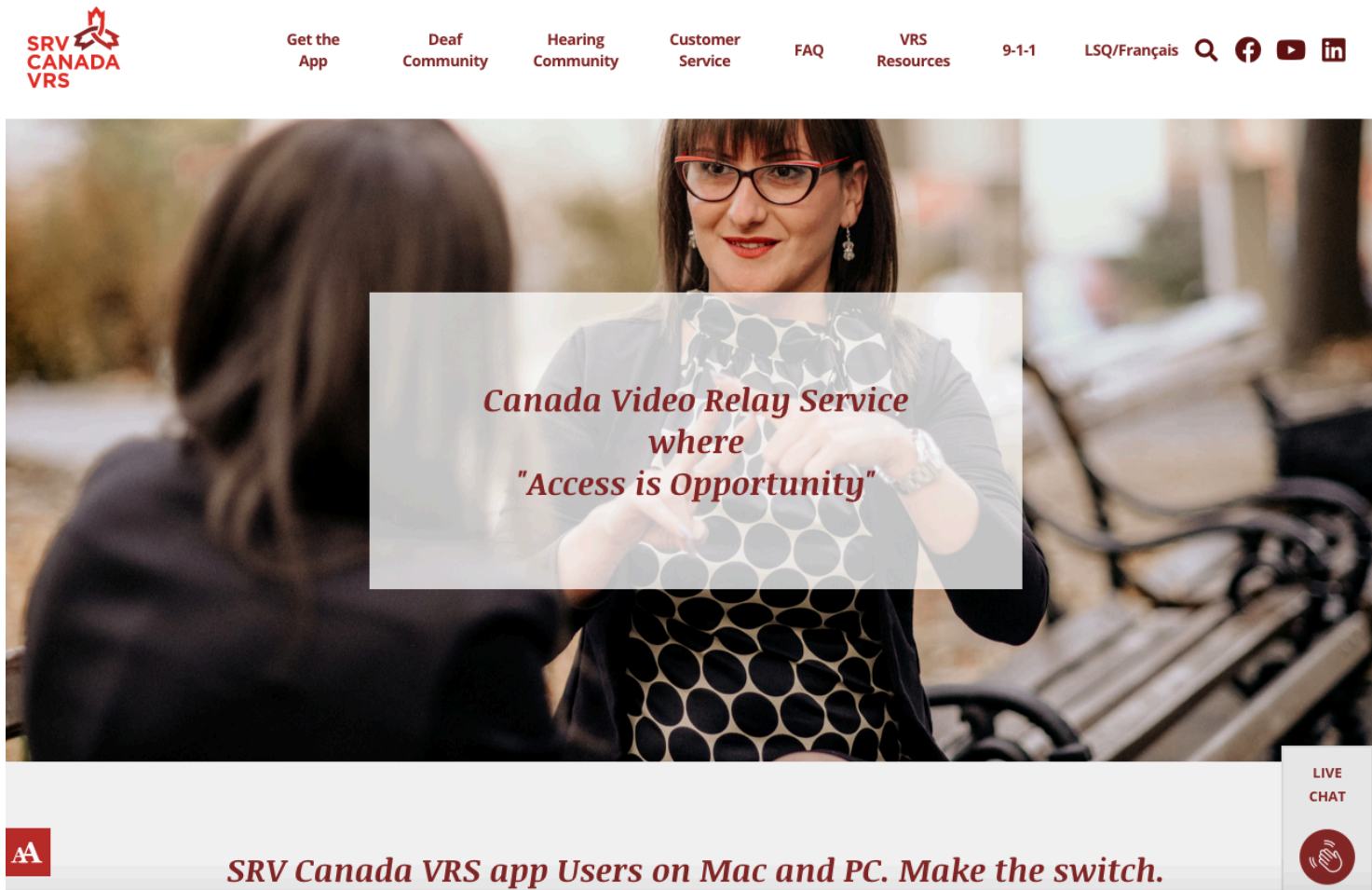
(Link on the MNL Municipal Elections page)

Barrier-specific Approaches

Considerations

These include:

- *Video Relay Service (VRS) calls*
- *ElectionsNL videos (sensory disability in the polling station)*
- *BUT not all barriers are addressed by mail-in ballots either:*
 - *No template for a voter who is blind*
 - *No support from staff if needed*



- *FREE*
- *“ Yes, we are willing to receive VRS calls...”*
- Live translator will connect after a short wait to fully connect with the deaf caller

<https://srvcanadavrs.ca/en> (Link on the **MNL Municipal Elections** page)

<https://www.clearingourpath.ca/>



Clearing Our Path

Creating accessible environments for people impacted by blindness

[Home](#) [About](#) [Blindness Basics](#) [Design Needs](#) [Emergency & Safety](#) [Resources](#) [Contact Us](#)



22% of Canadians (1 in 4.5) live with some form of disability. That's a substantial group of users you cannot afford to overlook in your building project or public space.

Accessibility Information

The videos on this page were produced for Elections NL by the [Coalition of Persons with Disabilities - Newfoundland and Labrador](#) (full credits are at the bottom of this page). The videos are presented in American Sign Language with captioning and voice-over in plain language and feature information for voters on the voting process. If you have a question about something not covered here, please contact us.

Voting in a Provincial Election in Newfoundland and Labrador



How Can I Vote?



Check out these videos
produced by COD-NL
for Elections NL
(2017)

<https://www.elections.gov.nl.ca/elections/voters/access.html>

Place-Based Access & Community Outreach

Considerations

- *MEA Sections 48 & 49?*
 - *Incapacitated voter*
 - *Mobile and special polls*
- *What if you aren't allowed in a facility?*
- *Older residents without local family to help?*

إتمام عملية الاقتراع

Municipality of _____ Municipal Election

Ballot – Councillors

Vote for up to _____ candidates.

#	Candidate
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Municipality of _____ Municipal Election

Ballot - Mayor

Vote for one candidate only.

#	Candidate	Mark an "X"
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

1 قم بتعبئة أوراق الاقتراع

2

Declaration Form

استمارة التصريح
أنا الموقع أدناه أصرح بأنني
مواطن كندي وعمرى يزيد عن 18
عاماً، ويحق لي التصويت في
هذه الانتخابات، وأننى لم أقم
بالتصويت في أى مركز
اقتراع آخر خلال هذه
الانتخابات.
توقيع: _____
الاسم: _____

قم بتعبئة استمارة التصريح الانتخابية

أدخلها بالظرف

أدخل الورقة في المغلف

A مغلف التصويت السري
Ballot Secrecy Envelope

واقفل المغلف

أغلق مغلفات التصويت المكتملة فقط
Enclose completed ballot(s) only

3

B مغلف الإعادة
Return Envelope

انظر إلى تعليمات التصويت لمعرفة الأماكن المتاحة للإعادة
See Voting Directions for return location(s)

واقفل وأدخلها المغلف

Read this first...

Voting Directions

Follow these steps to keep your vote secret and ensure your ballot is not spoiled. A spoiled ballot cannot be counted. You must:

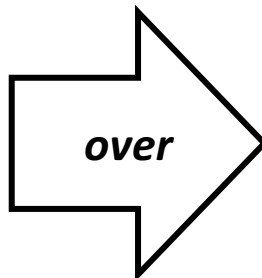
1. Complete your ballot(s) and insert into the **white** Ballot Secrecy Envelope (A).

- **Seal Envelope A** -

2. Sign and print your name on the **yellow** Declaration Form.
3. Insert your completed Declaration Form and sealed Ballot Secrecy Envelope into the **yellow** Return Envelope (B).

- **Seal Envelope B** -

Your ballot kit is now complete. You may return it to the [Town Offices during regular office hours and/or dropbox] or to your designated poll location on Election Day.



Remember

It is against the law to use more than the ballot(s) provided or to vote under another's name. If found guilty, offenders may be subject to a fine and/or imprisonment as per Sections 99 and 100 of the *Municipal Elections Act*.

Questions

If you require assistance, please contact us.

Phone:

Email:

Where and When

You may return your completed ballot kit to the Town Offices during regular office hours [*and to the Town Dropbox*] until [x] p.m. on Monday, September 27th.
[*insert Town Office street address*]

Between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. on **Election Day, Tuesday September 28th**, you may return your completed ballot kit to the polling station located at:
[*insert poll location street address*]

Literacy & Linguistic Access

Considerations

- *Are there other cultural communities in your town?*
- *Are there newcomers who aren't familiar with Canadian election processes?*
- *What kinds of resources/supports would help?*
- *Are there organizations who can help?*

<https://municipalnl.ca/municipal-elections/>

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- › [Municipal Elections Act](#)

DASHBOARD

Email

Password

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS



MNL and [PMA](#) are working together to provide support to municipalities so they may carry out safe municipal elections during COVID-19. [Read the release.](#)

RESOURCES

- › [COVID Safe Municipal Election Brief](#)
- › [Voting by Mail Steps-Timelines-Checklist](#)
- › [Template VBM request letter](#)

We are working on additional supports and will continue to update this website as well as inform members through emails including MNL's weekly infoNOTE.



<https://municipalnl.ca/municipal-elections/>

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IN THIS SECTION

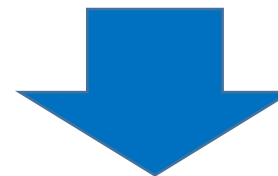
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DASHBOARD

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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS



June 17 → [Watch on demand: VBM Regulations templates and guidelines.](#) View the webinar slide presentation [here](#).

June 30 → WEBINAR: Is your election accessible? Register [here](#). Resources for this webinar:

- [ACCESS Audit Checklist](#)
- [ACCESS AUDIT CHECKLIST GUIDE](#)
- [Universal Design NL](#)
- [Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Resources](#)
- [WORDS with DIGNITY](#) – Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
- [SRV Canada VRS](#)
- [CNIB Foundation Clearing our Path](#)

July 5 → Council adoption of VBM regulations. Sample VBM resolution wording: *"Be it resolved that the Town of [insert] adopt the Town of [insert] Vote By Mail Regulations and forward them to the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs for review and approval in writing pursuant to Sections 54 and 97 of the Municipal Elections Act."*


1

+

2

+

3



Self-Audit Checklist - Election Polling Station/Other Locations

Activity	Yes	No	Action
1. Is directional signage accessible?			
2. Is parking accessible?			
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5. Is the main entry clearly visible and well-lit?			
6. Is the entrance accessible? (ie. Can everyone use the same principal entrance without assistance?)			
7. Are there automated doors or push-button operated electronic doors for access? (Exterior)			

1

*Self-Audit
Guide & Checklist*



*Other
Resources & Links*



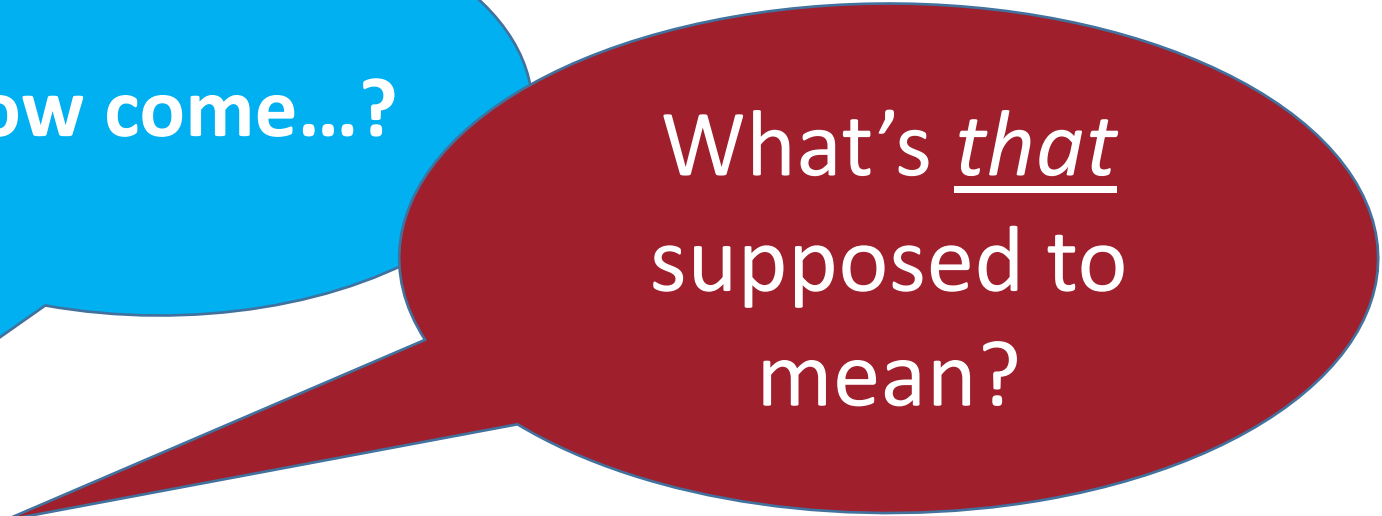
*Access Advisor
consultations*



What if...?



How come...?



What's that
supposed to
mean?

Questions?

info@municipalnl.ca
1-800-440-6536 (toll-free)



Sooooooooo...