

# Community Leader Handbook

---

Indigenous electors



Visit [elections.ca](https://elections.ca) for the official information you need to vote  
1-800-463-6868 / [elections.ca](https://elections.ca) / 📞 TTY 1-800-361-8935

# About this handbook



This handbook contains all the basic information on when, where and the ways to register and vote in a federal election. It also has specific information for First Nations, Inuit and Métis electors.

## Other information products

There are many products you can use to spread the word about the federal election, including:

- [\*Guide to the federal election\*](#)\*
- [\*List of accepted ID to register and vote\*](#)\*
- Infographics, *flyers and informational videos*

\*Available in braille, large print and DAISY formats (English and French only), as well as 17 Indigenous languages: Atikamekw, Blackfoot, Dene, Gwich'in, Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, Innu (Montagnais), Michif, Mi'kmaq, Mohawk, Moose Cree, Nisga'a, Ojibwe, Oji-Cree, Plains Cree, Saulteaux and Stoney.

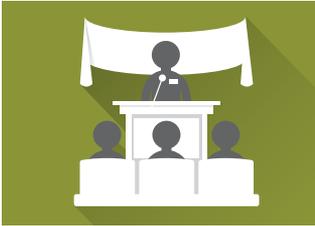
Visit **[elections.ca](https://elections.ca)** to download resources or call **1-800-463-6868** or **1-800-361-8935 (TTY)** to request printed copies.



# Table of contents

About Elections Canada and federal elections.....	4
Working at an election.....	5
Registering to vote .....	6
Ways to register .....	7
Ways to vote .....	8
Voting at a polling station .....	11
Voting early at an Elections Canada office or a Vote on Campus office .....	12
ID to vote .....	13
Accessibility .....	17
Voting assistance tools and services.....	18
Safeguards in the electoral process.....	20
Safeguards for counting votes.....	21
Feedback is important to us.....	22

# About Elections Canada and federal elections



Headed by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, Elections Canada is an independent, non-partisan agency of Parliament. Its primary task is to be prepared at all times to deliver a federal general election, by-election or referendum.

In a federal election, Canadians vote to elect a member of Parliament (MP) to represent them in the House of Commons. MPs debate and pass laws on Canadians' behalf.

One MP represents the people of one riding. There are currently 343 ridings in Canada.

Candidates can represent a political party, or they can be independent, meaning they have no association with a political party. After all the votes are counted for each riding, the political party with the most MPs in the House of Commons usually forms the government. The leader of that party becomes the Prime Minister of Canada.

## **To register and vote in a federal election, a person must:**

- be a Canadian citizen
- be at least 18 years old on election day
- prove their identity and address



# Working at an election



Over 200,000 Canadians across the country are hired during an election. The jobs are paid and training is provided.

## To work at an election, a person must:

- be a Canadian citizen
- be at least 16 years old on election day
- remain non-partisan

Anyone interested in being an election worker can learn more and apply online at [elections.ca/jobs](https://elections.ca/jobs).

## Indigenous Elder and youth workers

Elections Canada hires Indigenous Elders and youth to offer a welcoming presence and help electors navigate the voting process at the polls.

### Key activities

- Offer interpretation services in the language of the community, if the elector is not comfortable in French or English
- Greet electors arriving at the polling place
- Help explain to electors the voting process, including registration procedures
- Answer electors' questions
- Help with voting procedures, such as reading the ballot before it is handed to an elector

Applicants must send their resumé and cover letter to the returning officer for the riding (electoral district). They can find information about electoral districts using the online [Voter Information Service](https://elections.ca/voter-information-service) at [elections.ca](https://elections.ca).

The length of employment and deadline to apply will vary by position. Please ask the returning officer for more details.

**Note:** Like all election workers, Indigenous Elders and youth may not take part in any partisan political activities during their term of employment with Elections Canada.



# Registering to vote



To vote in a federal election, electors must be registered. Most Canadians who are eligible to vote are already registered in the National Register of Electors, but they may not be if they've recently moved or become a Canadian citizen or have never voted before.

All registered electors will get a voter information card in the mail about two weeks before election day. It tells them where and when they can vote and whether their assigned polling station is accessible. Electors can also register in person at their assigned polling station when they go to vote.



## Confirm place of residence

An elector's **place of residence** or **home address** is where they ordinarily live, where they think of as home or have adopted as home. Once they have confirmed their place of residence, they must have ID with that address to register and vote. Please see the full list of [accepted ID](#) for proof of address.



## Temporary absence

If an elector leaves home temporarily (for school, work or any other reason) but intends to return to it, it can remain their place of residence.

Once they've decided on their **place of residence**, they must bring ID with that address when they go to register and vote.



# Ways to register



## Online

To register or update their address online, electors can use the [Online Voter Registration Service](#) at **elections.ca**. If they register online, they may be asked for the number from:

- their driver's licence
- their provincial or territorial ID card (Alberta, Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan or Yukon)



## In person

To register in person, electors will need to bring [accepted ID](#) with them. After an election is called, they can register and vote in person at:

- any Elections Canada office across the country by the Tuesday before election day, 6 p.m.
- their assigned polling station on election day or advance polling days

To find the addresses for these locations or view the list of accepted ID, visit **elections.ca**.



## By mail

To register by mail, electors can call Elections Canada at **1-800-463-6868** or **1-800-361-8935 (TTY)** and ask for a form to be sent to them by mail.



# Ways to vote

## **Electors can vote almost any time during the election period.**

They may choose the voting option that works best for them.



### **Vote on election day at their assigned polling station**

Electors' assigned polling stations will be open for 12 hours (hours vary by time zone).



### **Vote on advance polling days at their assigned polling station**

Electors' assigned advance polling stations will be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on the Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday the week before election day.



### **Vote at a mobile advance poll (certain communities only)**

Mobile advance polls will visit some remote, isolated and low-density communities. (During the four-day advance voting period, these polls are set up for less than four days, based on the size of the community and its needs.)



### **Vote early at any Elections Canada office across the country**

Electors can go to any Elections Canada office by the Tuesday before election day, 6 p.m. They will vote using the special ballot process. After the election is called, electors may visit **elections.ca** or call us to find the office nearest them.

For information about the accessibility of any Elections Canada office, call **1-800-463-6868** or **1-800-361-8935 (TTY)**.



# Ways to vote



## Vote at a participating campus

Elections Canada Vote on Campus offices will be open on participating campuses across the country for four days about two weeks before election day. Any eligible elector can vote at a [Vote on Campus location](#).



## Vote by mail

After the election has been called, Canadian electors anywhere in the world may apply to vote by mail.

How:

1. Apply to vote by mail, online or by contacting any Elections Canada office.
2. Once the application is accepted, Elections Canada will send a special ballot voting kit in the mail.
3. The deadline to apply to vote by mail is the Tuesday before election day, 6 p.m.

Electors should apply as soon as possible to allow enough time for their special ballot voting kit to reach them and for them to return their completed ballot to Elections Canada by election day.

**Once electors apply to vote by mail, they can't change their mind and vote at advance polls or on election day.**

### Electors can apply to vote by mail:

- online at [elections.ca](#)
- at any **Elections Canada office** across the country
- by calling us at **1-800-463-6868** to request an application form



## Questions about the voting process

If electors have any questions about the voting process, they can call **1-800-463-6868** or **1-800-361-8935 (TTY)**, or reach out to their local Elections Canada office.



# Ways to vote

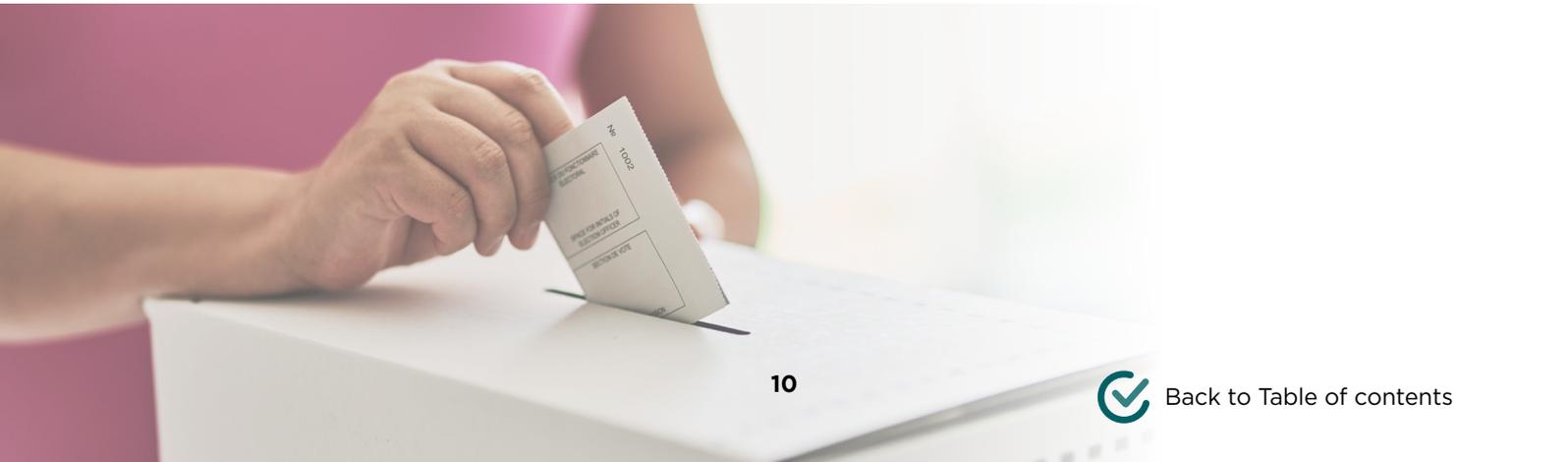


## Indigenous language interpretation

To answer questions from electors who do not speak English or French, Elections Canada works closely with CanTalk, a real-time language interpretation service available in multiple Indigenous languages.

When an elector who does not speak English or French calls Elections Canada, we connect with CanTalk to request simultaneous interpretation services. Visit [cantalk.com/our-languages](https://cantalk.com/our-languages) to see the list of available languages.

If an interpreter is not available at the time of the call, CanTalk will suggest a time for a callback. Interpretation services are subject to availability. The more notice given, the more likely interpretation services can be provided, as interpreters can be contacted ahead of time.



# Voting at a polling station

**Here's what happens when an elector votes at their assigned polling station on election day or advance polling days.**

- 1** An election worker greets the elector and shows them to the right table.
- 2** The elector shows their proof of identity and address to an election worker.
- 3** An election worker checks their name on the list of electors and gives them a folded ballot.
- 4** The elector goes behind the voting screen, marks their ballot in the circle beside the name of their chosen candidate, and refolds the ballot to keep their vote secret.
- 5** The elector returns their ballot to the election worker, who removes the tab so that the elector's ballot can't be traced back to them.
- 6** The elector puts their ballot in the ballot box.

Election workers are there to help. If an elector needs anything to make their voting experience easier, they can speak to an election worker when they go to vote. For example, they can:

- Let an election worker know if they requested language or sign language interpretation ahead of time.
- Request one of the many voting assistance tools and services available.
- Let an election worker know if they've brought someone with them, if they need someone to help them mark their ballot or if they've brought a personal mobile device to read the ballot behind the voting screen. However, it is illegal to break the secrecy of the vote, including by taking pictures of a marked ballot. This prevents people from being intimidated or influenced to vote a certain way.

# Voting early at an Elections Canada office or a Vote on Campus office

**Voting early at an Elections Canada office or a Vote on Campus office is different from voting on election day or advance polling days. Here, electors will vote using the special ballot process.**

- 1** An election worker greets the elector at the counter and asks for proof of identity and address.
- 2** The election worker adds, updates or confirms the elector's information and asks them to verify it on the computer screen.
- 3** The elector is given a ballot and instructions. They may ask for the list of candidates for their riding if they need it.
- 4** The elector goes behind the voting screen, marks their ballot and returns to the election worker.
- 5** The election worker gives them two envelopes. First, the elector puts their ballot in the unmarked inner envelope and seals it. Then, the elector puts that envelope in the outer envelope and seals it.
- 6** The elector reads the written declaration on this outer envelope and signs it.
- 7** The elector puts their envelope in the ballot box.

## **Keeping votes secret when counting special ballots**

When it's time to count the special ballots, the election worker will remove all the unmarked inner envelopes from their signed outer envelopes. The election worker will then return only the unmarked inner envelopes to the ballot box and mix them up. This way, no ballot can be traced back to the person who cast it and their vote remains secret.



# ID to vote

**Electors have three options to prove their identity and address when they go to vote.**

## Option 1



**Show one ID card issued by a Canadian government** (federal, provincial/territorial or local) with their photo, name and current address. For example: their driver's licence.

## Option 2



**Show two pieces of ID.** Both must have their name and at least one must have their current address. Electors can also use their voter information card as proof of address if their name and address are correct on the card. They will still need to bring one other piece of ID with their name, for example, a band membership card, Métis card or card issued by an Inuit local authority.

+



### **From a government or government agency**

- band membership card
- birth certificate
- Canadian citizenship card or certificate
- Canadian Forces identity card
- Canadian passport (accepted only as proof of identity)
- card issued by an Inuit local authority
- firearms licence
- government cheque or cheque stub
- government statement of benefits
- health card
- Indian status card or temporary confirmation of registration
- licence or card issued for fishing, trapping or hunting
- Métis card
- Old age security card



# ID to vote

## From a financial institution

- bank statement
- credit card statement
- mortgage contract or statement
- pension plan statement
- personal cheque

## From Elections Canada

- voter information card

## From a private organization

- employee card
- residential lease or sub-lease
- utility bill (e.g. electricity; water; telecommunications services, including telephone, cable or satellite)

## From an educational institution

- correspondence issued by a school, college or university
- student identity card

## Letters of confirmation

- [letter of confirmation of residence](#) from a First Nations band or reserve or an Inuit local authority
- [letter of confirmation of residence](#), letter of stay, admission form, or statement of benefits from one of the following designated establishments:
  - student residence
  - seniors' residence
  - long-term care institution
  - shelter
  - soup kitchen
  - a community-based residential facility



# ID to vote

## Option 3



**If an elector doesn't have ID documents, they can still vote** if they declare their identity and address in writing and have someone who knows them and who is assigned to their polling station vouch for them.

The voucher must be able to prove their identity and address. A person can vouch for only one person (except in long-term care facilities).

### Important information about ID

- The full list is available in some Indigenous languages at [elections.ca](https://elections.ca).
- We accept pieces of ID in their original format. If your document was issued electronically, like an e-statement or an e-invoice, bring a printout or show it on a mobile device.
- We accept different pieces of ID from the same source if the documents serve different purposes. For example, we accept an invoice and a transcript from the same school.
- Your name and address must be printed on the ID. They can't be added by hand, unless they are added by the issuer of the document, like a residence administrator or a guardian.
- We accept expired ID, as long as it has your name and current address.
- The pieces of ID listed above are authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer. No other pieces will be accepted.
- The pieces of ID accepted for federal elections are not the same as for provincial, territorial or municipal elections.
- The pieces of ID must be in English or French. In Nunavut, Inuktitut pieces of ID are also accepted.



# ID to vote



## Letter of confirmation of residence

Some electors may have difficulty proving their address. If they live at or receive services from one of the following designated establishments, they can ask for a letter of confirmation of residence, letter of stay, admission form or statement of benefits:

- Community-based residential facility
- Seniors' residence
- First Nations community or Inuit local authority
- Shelter
- Long-term care facility
- Soup kitchen
- Native friendship centre\*
- Student residence
- Women's shelter

\*Only if the establishment provides food service.

We will also accept a letter of confirmation from a public curator, public guardian or public trustee.

If an elector needs to use a letter of confirmation of residence, they should contact the establishment as soon as possible after the election is called. The establishment may issue a letter of confirmation on its official letterhead or use the Elections Canada template [Letter of Confirmation of Residence](#), available at **elections.ca**.

The elector will still need to show a second piece of ID with their name.

# Accessibility



All electors are assigned a polling station for election day and advance polling days. Once the election is called, electors can make sure their assigned polling stations meet their accessibility needs by:

- checking their voter information card
- visiting **elections.ca** and entering their postal code into the [Voter Information Service box](#)
- calling **1-800-463-6868** or **1-800-361-8935 (TTY)**

Elections Canada also welcomes Video Relay Service (VRS) calls. Visit [srvcnadavrs.ca](#) to learn more.

If an elector's assigned polling station doesn't meet their accessibility needs, or if they live in a community where there is no polling station within a reasonable distance from their home, they should call their local Elections Canada office or **1-800-361-8935 (TTY)**. We will help them find an alternate polling station or discuss other ways they may be able to vote.

More information about the [accessibility criteria](#) used to select polling stations is available at **elections.ca**.



**To request voting assistance in advance, including language and sign language interpretation**, electors must call the Elections Canada office in their riding by the Tuesday before election day, 6 p.m. The number can be found:

- on their **voter information card**
- by visiting **elections.ca** and entering their postal code into the [Voter Information Service box](#)
- by calling **1-800-463-6868** or **1-800-361-8935 (TTY)**

Electors can also bring an interpreter to help them vote. Interpreters need to make a written declaration, may assist more than one elector and do not have to be an eligible elector.

For all the official information on voting, electors may visit **elections.ca**. The website is fully accessible and has voting information in multiple languages, including American Sign Language and Quebec Sign Language. Electors can also order products in other formats, including large print, braille and DAISY.



# Voting assistance tools and services

We offer many tools and services to make voting in the federal election easier. If an elector requires assistance during the voting process, they can call Elections Canada, visit any Elections Canada office across the country or speak to an election worker when they go to vote.

## Voting assistance tools and services available on election day:



**Ballot** with candidate names in **large print**



**Large-print** and **braille** lists of candidates



**Tactile and braille voting template**



**Magnifiers**



**Language, sign language interpretation** and other assistance (see Accessibility section)



**Assistance marking the ballot** (electors can bring someone they know or ask an election worker)



**Large-grip pencil** (electors can also bring their own pen or pencil)



**Signature guide**

**Note:** Braille lists of candidates are available only on election day. Large print is available on advance polling days and on election day.

If an elector has trouble marking their ballot, they can bring someone to help them or ask an election worker for help. The helper must make a written declaration that they will respect the secrecy of the vote. The helper does not need to be an eligible elector. Electors do not need to use an “X” to mark their ballot. They can use any other mark, as long as it clearly indicates their choice and does not identify them in any way.

Electors are also welcome to have other assistance when they vote. This could include bringing their service animal or using an assistive device, such as a mobile device or smartphone.



# Voting assistance tools and services

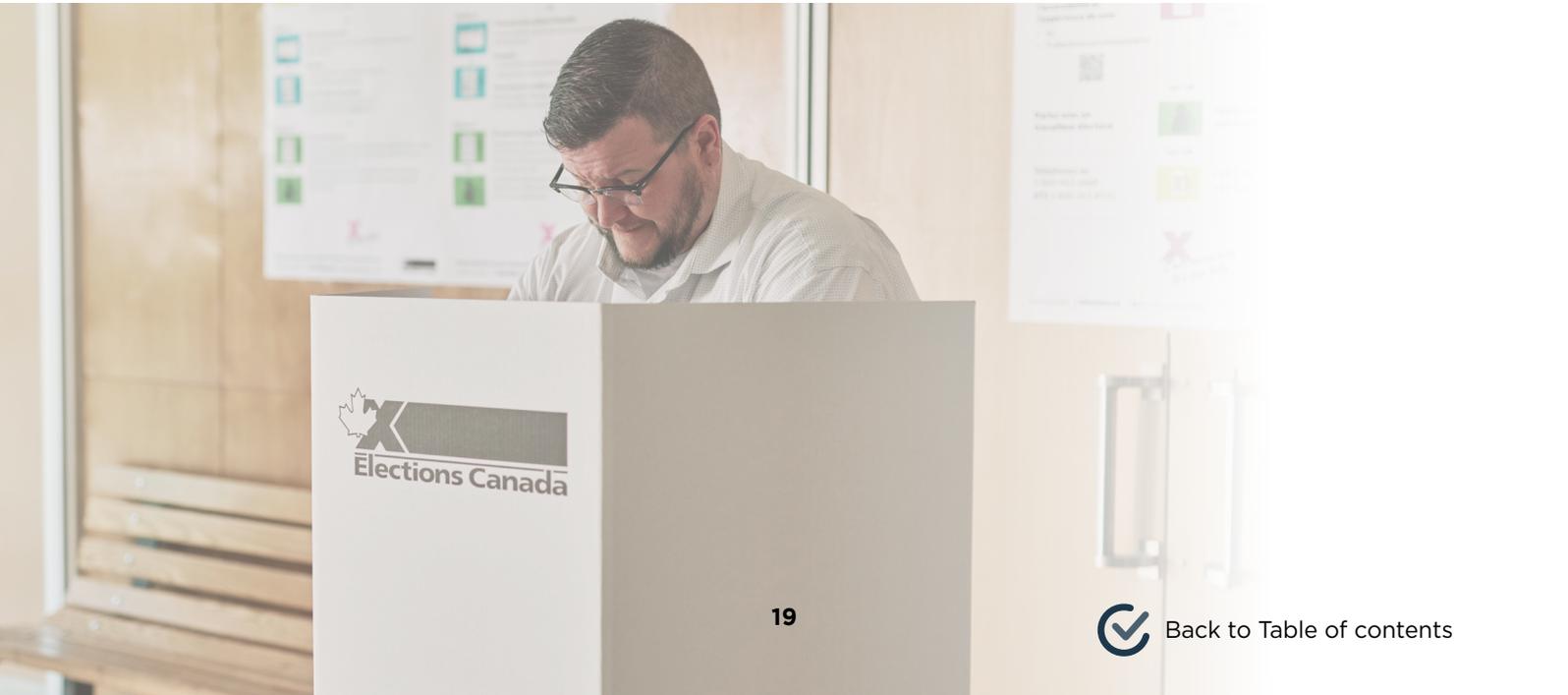


## Help from Indigenous Elders and youth

Through the Indigenous Elders and Youth program, Indigenous electors can receive interpretation services and assistance with the voting process on advance polling days and on election day.

This service is offered at polling places that primarily serve Indigenous electors and is subject to the availability of participants. Since the 2019 federal election, we have expanded our efforts to increase participation in this program.

Elders and youth are not allowed to go behind the voting screen to help an elector. If an elector cannot mark the ballot because they are unable to read or because of a disability, the deputy returning officer may assist them behind the voting screen.



# Safeguards in the electoral process

**There are safeguards built into the federal electoral process at every stage to protect the integrity of elections.**

Elections Canada, security agencies, the Commissioner of Canada Elections, political parties, candidates and electors all have a role to play in ensuring the integrity of an election. Elections Canada's role includes administering federal elections and overseeing the safeguards in the voting process.



## **Security by design**

Elections Canada makes security a foundational part of every new IT system and process we develop.



## **Working with security partners**

Elections Canada works with security agencies to share information and discuss our distinct and complementary roles, responsibilities and protocols.



## **Verifying elector eligibility**

Elections Canada continually updates the National Register of Electors, using data from over 40 sources, including from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Before voting, electors must prove their identity and address.



## **Transparency**

The voting and counting processes are fully observed by witnesses, including candidates and parties' representatives. Election workers count paper ballots in front of witnesses.



## **Referrals to the Commissioner of Canada Elections**

Potential contraventions of the *Canada Elections Act* are referred to the Commissioner of Canada Elections. The Commissioner can receive complaints from the public in English, French and other languages.

# Safeguards for counting votes



Ballots are counted by trained and paid election workers, in the presence of candidates, candidates' representatives or other designated observers.

Before the count, election workers close the doors of the voting place. No one is allowed to enter or leave.

The election officer who counts the votes then:

- counts the number of electors who voted
- counts the spoiled ballots, places them in an envelope supplied for this purpose and seals it
- counts the unused ballots that are not detached from the booklets of ballots, places them in the envelope supplied for this purpose and seals it
- totals the number of electors who voted, the number of spoiled ballots and the number of unused ballots to ensure that all ballots provided by the returning officer (the official who manages the election in the electoral district) are accounted for

To ensure transparency, with many people watching, they unfold each ballot and say aloud the name marked on each ballot.

Staff tally up the votes, record the tallies on paper and report the totals to the returning officer (the official who manages the election for that electoral district).



# Feedback is important to us



We welcome electors' feedback on their voting experience, including on accessible tools and services. To let us know how we're doing, electors can:

- complete a [feedback form](#) at **elections.ca** or when they go to vote
- speak with an election worker or call **1-800-463-6868** or **1-800-361-8935 (TTY)**

