

VERKIEZINGSKRANT

Election Guide



Municipal Council Elections

Wednesday, 18 March 2026



The municipal council elections will be held on Wednesday, 18 March.



You are aged 18 or over.



You are officially Dutch.
You are registered in your municipality.



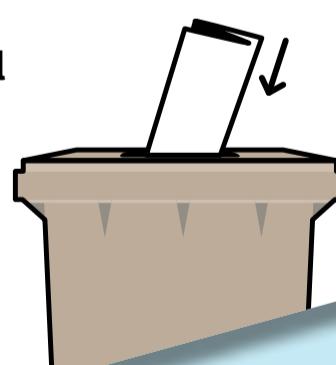
OR you have a different EU nationality and officially live in the Netherlands.



OR you have been living in the Netherlands for more than 5 years, and have a residence permit.



You can vote in your local municipal elections!



What does the municipal council do?

A municipality is made up of one or more towns.
All kinds of decisions to be made that affect the area.
That is what the municipality does.

Every municipality has a municipal council.
The council members are elected every 4 years.
These members will decide on the municipal plans for the next 4 years.
The council also decides what to spend money on.

Some examples of municipal decisions include:



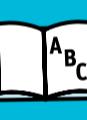
Waste

The municipality organises waste collection.
The council also decides whether waste is to be separated, and which bins are used.



Poverty

The municipality helps people who do not have enough money to live.
These include people who are out of work, or who are in debt.
The municipal council decides whether more should be done to help people without much money. One idea is a special pass that offers discounts on sports or other fun local activities.



Libraries and Language Lessons

The municipality provides language lessons for people who need them.
It also spends money on libraries.
The council decides how much money libraries get.



Health

The municipality helps people who need healthcare.
This includes wheelchairs, or help with household tasks.
The municipality also supports parents, via Youth and Family Centres and other places.



Sport

The municipality helps fund sports fields, indoor sports centres, stadiums, and swimming pools.
It also gives funding to sports associations.
The council decides which associations receive money, and how much.



Permits

The municipality gives permits to businesses and organisations.
Shops, restaurants, theatres, and town festivals are some examples.
A permit sets out agreements.
These can be about restaurant opening times, or club noise levels.



Housing and Traffic

The municipality decides where to build in the area.
Building projects include shops, sports fields, playgrounds, bicycle paths, and roads. The municipality also decides on whether to build rental or owner-occupied housing.

What the municipal council does



1 Deciding on local plans and regulations (rules)

A plan or regulation is put in place if over half of the council members vote for it.

2 Monitoring the mayor and municipal executive



If a plan is approved, it is carried out. The mayor and municipal executive are the ones who do so.



The council monitors whether the executive carries out the plans correctly.



The council members submit questions to the executive.



The council can fire (send away) executive members who do not do their job properly.
Another executive member must then be chosen.



Tax

Municipalities need a lot of money. That is why we pay municipal taxes.

An example of a municipal tax is the waste-collection levy, which pays for waste removal and processing.

The council decides what taxes must be paid, and the amounts.

Decide who gets your vote

Vote on the political party that best represents your views.

Not sure which party is best for you? Here are a few tips.

Find out what parties want

Read about the political parties' plans on their websites, or view their social media pages on Facebook, Instagram, or elsewhere.



Ask the parties questions.
Send an e-mail, or call them.
Their e-mail addresses and phone numbers are on their websites.



Members of political parties hand out leaflets on the street.
Sometimes they knock on doors.
You can ask them whatever you like.



There are sometimes local election meetings.
These are free to attend.



Check the television, or listen to radio shows, like election debates.
Follow the local news outlets.
That is where political parties often announce their plans.



Talk to others

Ask which political parties they do or do not vote for, and why.



Then think about it: what is your own opinion?
Which party you vote for is entirely up to you.

Use a voting tool

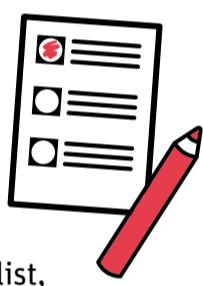
See whether there are any voting tools available for your municipality, such as www.stemwijzer.nl.



You will answer questions on 30 topics, and the site will tell you which parties agree with you the most.

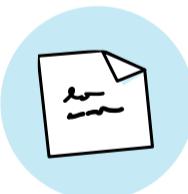
Which person to vote for?

Lots of people vote for the number 1 in their party of choice.
That person is called the 'lead candidate'.



You can also vote for someone else on the party list, if you think they are a better match for your area.

Assistance at the polling station



You are allowed to take a how-to-vote card into the booth with you, showing the party and the candidate you wish to vote for.



There is one exception.
If you have a physical limitation and cannot colour in a circle, someone else may enter the booth with you.



Every polling station has a magnifying glass available.



You can ask for 1 new ballot paper if you make a mistake.



You must enter the booth alone.



The website www.waarismijnstemlokaal.nl shows what kinds of help are available at each polling station.
You can also visit your municipality's election page.



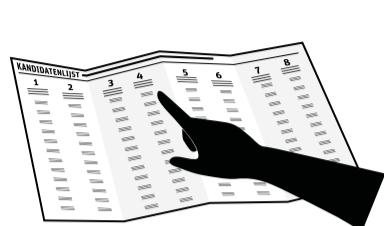
You can ask for help, but only outside the voting booth.
You can ask a polling station officer to point out the name of the person you want to vote for.

Voting: Here's How



1 A voting pass will be sent to your house

The council will send you a voting pass and a list of candidates.



2 Choose a political party

The candidate list will show the parties participating in the election, as well as which people represent each party.

7:30 a.m.
9:00 p.m.



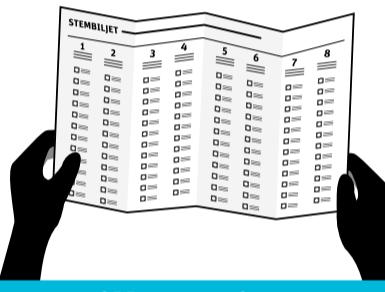
3 Go to the polling station

On **Wednesday, 18 March 2026**, take your voting pass to the polling station. Take your passport, driver's licence, or ID card with you. If they expired less than 5 years ago, you can still use them to vote. You can also show a residency permit as ID. If it is currently valid, you will be allowed to vote.



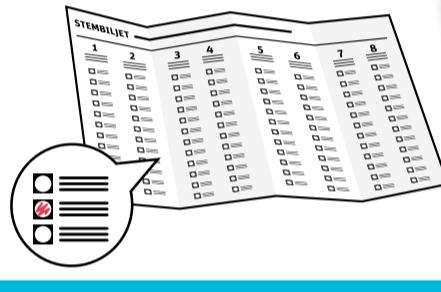
4 Submit your voting pass

Give your voting pass to the people at the polling station. Also show them your passport, driver's licence, ID card, or residency permit. The officers at the polling place will check your voting card, and your identity.



5 You will receive a ballot paper

The ballot paper lists the political parties participating in the election in your municipality. The people you can vote for are listed beside their political parties.



6 Fill in one circle red

Take your ballot paper into a voting booth. You must go in alone. Nobody is allowed to watch you vote. In the booth, there will be a red pencil. Find the name of the person you want to vote for on the ballot paper. Colour the circle red in front of their name.



7 Put your ballot paper into the ballot box

Fold up your ballot paper, and put it into the ballot box.



8 You have voted!

After 9 p.m., all the votes will be counted. The results will be available online, for example at www.nos.nl. Also check the news, the radio, the TV, or the newspapers.

ProDemos provides information and education on the workings of democracy and the rule of law, and show people what they themselves can do to exercise influence at various levels: through their municipal council, district water board, provincial council, country, or in the European Union.

ProDemos | Hofweg 1H | 2511 AA Den Haag
(070) 757 02 00 | info@prodemos.nl | prodemos.nl

Election Guide

Production and text: ProDemos

Design: Lidewij Spitshuis ontwerpstudio

Printing: Rodi Rotatiedruk

Translation: Brent Annable

In partnership with: Stichting ABC (ABC Foundation), Stichting Het Begint met Taal (It Starts With Language Foundation), Reading and Writing Foundation, Stichting Makkelijk Lezen (Easy Reading Foundation)