

Equipment for People Who Are Blind or Have Reduced Vision

September 2017

Is it difficult for you to do everyday tasks because of your reduced vision? If you need equipment to live safely in your home, to work or study, or to look after someone who depends on you, the Ministry of Health may be able to help.

There is a range of equipment that may benefit people who are blind or have reduced vision, including mobility canes, screen-reading software, magnifiers and glasses.

Who can get equipment?

If you're a New Zealand resident living in New Zealand, are blind, Deafblind or have reduced vision and aren't covered by ACC, you may be able to get equipment through the Ministry of Health.

Equipment may be provided to you at no charge. Children aged 15 years and under may be able to access a subsidy for glasses (Children's Spectacle Subsidy).

How can I get equipment?

An assessor completes an assessment of your needs and may recommend glasses or other vision equipment. An assessor is usually an optometrist, eye specialist or a service coordinator for the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind. Not all optometrists and eye specialists are accredited vision assessors. Contact Enable New Zealand on 0800 171 981 to find an assessor in your area.

The assessor identifies what equipment is needed for you to be safe and independent at home and in the community, to work or study, or to look after someone who depends on you.

To apply for Ministry of Health funding, the assessor sends an equipment application to Accessable (if you live in Auckland or Northland) or Enable New Zealand (if you live anywhere in the rest of New Zealand).

Types of equipment

Equipment

An assessor might recommend equipment such as mobility canes, screen-reading software or magnifiers. High-cost equipment, such as sonar canes, to help with independent mobility, will be considered if no other mobility resources meet your needs.

Glasses

An optometrist or eye specialist assesses for glasses and applies to Accessable or Enable New Zealand if:

- your corrected vision is within a certain range – either:
 - your corrected vision, in the better eye, does not exceed 6/24 with corrective lenses
 - you have a significant limitation in your binocular central field of vision (not less than 10° in extent in the widest diameter)
 - your overall binocular visual field has an extent of 30° or less in the widest diameter
- **and** glasses are essential for you to either:
 - be safe and independent at home
 - work or study to your maximum capacity
 - look after family who depend on you.

What do Accessable and Enable New Zealand do?

Accessable and Enable New Zealand receive applications from assessors and check these to ensure each assessor has considered the different support and equipment options available. This is so any equipment you get is suitable and the best for you. People with urgent needs usually get their equipment first.

Accessable and Enable New Zealand can repair equipment and collect it when you no longer need it (not including glasses).

For more information contact:

Accessable (Auckland/Northland)

Call free: 0508 001 002

Fax: 09 620 1702

www.accessable.co.nz

Enable New Zealand (rest of New Zealand)

Call free: 0800 17 1981

Fax: 06 353 5876

www.disabilityfunding.co.nz

Blind Foundation has a range of services for members who are blind, Deafblind or have vision loss, including instructors to help you learn skills for everyday activities, mobility canes, communication and employment, equipment, counselling and guide dogs.

Call free: 0800 24 33 33

www.blindfoundation.org.nz



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