



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

2:3 JUN 2020



Dear 

On 20 March 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *the total number of non-residents or non-citizens currently receiving any form of financial assistance from the Ministry of Social Development as of 20 March 2020, including benefits of any type and any Accommodation Supplements, Gold Cards etc*
- *the total value on a yearly basis for that assistance*
- *a breakdown of the information into country of origin of the recipients.*

Generally, migrants need to have permanent residence or New Zealand citizenship to receive benefit assistance from Work and Income. Permanent residence is granted by Immigration New Zealand. Citizenship is granted by the Department of Internal Affairs. More information about the residency requirements can be found on our website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/pensions/travelling-or-moving/moving-to-nz/residency-requirements-for-new-zealand-benefits-and-pensions.html#null.

However, clients who do not have permanent residence or citizenship may be entitled to receive the Emergency Benefit (EB) if the client is:

- a person who has made a claim for refugee or protected person status (also known as an asylum seeker) **and**
- is waiting for or appealing a decline decision to the Immigration and Protection Tribunal **and**
- has a valid visa or permit to be lawfully present in New Zealand **or**
- a person recognised as a refugee or protected person in New Zealand and has a valid visa or permit **or**
- applying for permanent residence and are compelled to remain in New Zealand due to some unforeseen reason.

Generally, clients are not entitled to a benefit if they are unlawfully in New Zealand.

The EB is an income and asset tested benefit payable to people who are in hardship and who are unable to earn enough income for themselves (and any dependent family) and cannot receive another benefit. Examples for situations in which clients may receive the EB are health condition, an injury or a disability, domestic circumstances

(for example caring responsibilities), age (for example 16 and 17 year olds), or any other reason (for example residence status).

More information about the EB can be found on our website: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/emergency-benefit/index.html>

The Ministry can provide you with data regarding non-residents in receipt of the EB. Please find attached Table One, containing the number of non-residents in receipt of the Emergency Benefit (EB) and the weekly amounts payable, broken down by place of birth, as at the end of March 2020.

Please note, 'non-resident' includes the following immigration statuses: Interim Visa, Limited Purpose Permit, Limited Visa, Living in other Countries, No Current Permit, Student, Temporary work permit, Unknown, Visitor, Work visa.

As a standard, the Ministry reports data quarterly. Therefore, please note, the attached table shows a snapshot at the end of March 2020.

The Ministry acknowledges public interest in statistics regarding resident non-citizens in receipt of financial assistance from the Ministry. However, the Ministry is unable to provide you with numbers of resident non-citizens in receipt of financial assistance, and the amounts payable to resident non-citizens. The Ministry does not require resident non-citizens that are in receipt of financial assistance to inform the Ministry of obtaining citizenship.

Therefore, although the Ministry verifies each client's eligibility on application, including immigration status, the Ministry cannot report the exact number of resident non-citizens in receipt of any type of financial assistance that the Ministry provides. Please note, in the year 2018, almost 36,000 people obtained New Zealand citizenship. The data would therefore show many clients as resident non-citizens although they have since become citizens. Reporting is currently not possible due to high fluctuations in that group. Any estimates would likely to be unreliable.

Your request for data regarding resident non-citizens is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation. Your request for the total annual value paid is refused under section 18(f) of the Act as the Ministry's reporting only allows for the weekly amount payable. In order to provide you with the annual amount paid, Ministry staff would have to identify all clients, and each of their individual payments that they received so far. This would require the Ministry to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your requests given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

Your request for a breakdown of the data by country of origin is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation. A breakdown by country of origin cannot be provided as the Ministry does not record this information and is not otherwise provided with the country of origin of its clients. However, the Ministry's database contains the clients' place of birth. The Ministry therefore provides you with a breakdown of the data by place of birth.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding non-residents or non-citizens who are currently receiving any form of financial assistance from the Ministry, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Bridget Saunders
**Manager, Issue Resolution
Service Delivery**

Table One: The number of non-residents in receipt of the Emergency Benefit (EB) and the weekly amounts payable, broken down by place of birth, as at the end of March 2020.

Country of Birth	Total	Weekly Amount payable
Afghanistan	11	\$3,603.54
Australia	S	\$228.07
Bangladesh	S	\$878.47
Belarus	S	\$250.98
Belgium	S	\$849.23
Cambodia	S	\$182.47
China, Peoples Republic of	37	\$12,430.56
Colombia	S	\$1,447.94
Cuba	S	\$218.98
Czechoslovakia	S	\$841.04
Egypt	S	\$383.98
Ethiopia	S	\$218.98
Fiji	10	\$2,904.39
Germany	S	\$284.67
Greece	S	\$218.98
India	15	\$5,122.24
Indonesia	S	\$285.98
Iran	9	\$3,566.31
Iraq	S	\$1,707.08
Jordan	S	\$958.80
Kiribati	S	\$218.98
Korea, Democratic People's Republic	S	\$182.47

Table One: The number of non-residents in receipt of the Emergency Benefit (EB) and the weekly amounts payable, broken down by place of birth, as at the end of March 2020.

Korea, Republic of	S	\$437.96
Lebanon	S	\$581.47
Malaysia	6	\$2,824.89
Moldova, Republic of	S	\$597.34
Mongolia	S	\$1,513.65
Myanmar, Union of (Burma)	S	\$696.00
Nepal	S	\$246.80
Oman	S	\$391.00
Pakistan	8	\$2,861.52
Philippines	S	\$1,940.79
Russian Federation	S	\$1,458.86
Samoa, Western	8	\$2,218.50
Saudi Arabia	S	\$1,535.76
Somalia	S	\$854.21
South Africa, Republic of	7	\$1,817.63
Sri Lanka	12	\$3,713.56
Tonga	S	\$267.98
Turkey	S	\$1,204.30
Uganda	S	\$214.47
Ukraine	S	\$383.98
United Arab Emirates	S	\$361.45
United Kingdom	S	\$998.05
Vanuatu	S	\$339.69

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Vietnam	S	\$640.98
Yemen, Arab Republic	S	\$218.98
Zimbabwe	S	\$884.52
Total	194	\$66,188.48

Notes:

- In order to protect client privacy, some values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs and public interest in the information.
- It is possible that a person's residency status has changed since it was added to a client's record, and that this has not been updated in the Ministry's system to date. To a small extent, this may result in inaccuracies of the data provided.