



20 May 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

On 7 April 2025, the Office of Hon Nicola Willis transferred part of your request to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) to respond to, namely parts 5-6.

On 14 April 2025, you advised the Ministry that you did not wish to proceed with part 5 of your request. This response will therefore only address part 6 of your request.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Before I respond to your request, I am providing you with some general information on the types of assistance the Ministry can assist refugees with.

General information on assistance available to refugees

The Ministry works alongside Immigration New Zealand (INZ) as part of the Refugee Quota Programme with INZ being the lead agency. Further information can be found here: www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/preparing-a-visa-application/living-in-new-zealand-permanently/information-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/guides-and-resources-for-asylum-seekers.

The Ministry assists refugees (regarded as former refugees once they arrive in NZ and are accepted under one of the refugee categories) with the transition to a resettlement region after their arrival. The Ministry have dedicated Work and Income Resettlement Co-ordinators who liaise with former refugees upon their arrival into the resettlement region.

Resettlement Co-ordinators ensure that settlement needs are met, book follow-up appointments and coordinate orientation activities for groups and individuals with local service providers. Once former refugees are housed and settled, the Ministry continues to work with former refugees and help those with work obligations to prepare and search for work. Job search assistance includes access to appropriate skills training courses and work brokerage services to help match refugees to suitable employment.

In terms of financial support for former refugees, each individual's situation is evaluated to determine their eligibility for what financial assistance they may qualify for, particularly regarding residency requirements. Former refugees who arrive in New Zealand through the Quota Refugee allocation, Asylum Seeker, Family Support or Convention Refugee visas are eligible to receive social welfare

support upon their arrival. Typically, they may receive the Emergency Benefit (EB) along with any additional assistance for which they may qualify.

Where a former refugee, protected person, Afghan interpreter or Afghan evacuee, does not qualify for other forms of government assistance that is not provided by the Ministry, they may be paid a Special Needs Grant (SNG) to re-establish themselves in the community to a maximum of \$5000. Further information can be found here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/refugee-protected-person-or-afghan-interpreter.html.

Additionally, former refugees may access non-financial support through the Pathways to Employment programme, more details can be found at the following link: www.redcross.org.nz/get-help/help-for-refugees/finding-a-job and information regarding the eligibility criteria for primary benefits can be found here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/index.html.

Please find my decision on your request set out below.

- *Please provide details of all funding for refugee placement in New Zealand, including winz assistance (housing, food. Clothing, bedding) everything,*

The Ministry does not assist with refugee placement but rather provides assistance once they arrive in NZ and are accepted under one of the refugee categories, as discussed above.

I understand your request has also been transferred to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), who may have information in scope of this part of your request. As such, I have not transferred your request to MBIE, in this instance.

I am refusing your request for information on the SNG, EB and Recoverable Assistance Payment assistance provided to refugees under section 18(f) of the Act, as substantial manual collation would be required to collate this information. If held, this information would only be contained within individual client files, which would each require manual review to respond to your request. 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 request 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.

I am providing you with the number of refugee Re-establishment grants as I believe this information may be of interest to you. Re-establishment grants can be paid to people in specific situations who are re-establishing themselves in the community, such as refugees. You can find more information on Re-establishment grants at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/re-establishment-grants-01.html.

Please refer to the table below which provides the number of refugee Re-establishment grants, distinct number of clients and total amount granted from 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2024 by quarter ending.

Quarter Ending	Number of grants	Number of clients	Amount Granted
September 2023	924	390	\$841,538.97
December 2023	990	378	\$838,295.38
March 2024	912	333	\$727,381.30
June 2024	828	345	\$705,309.59
September 2024	1,050	399	\$978,902.52
December 2024	1,110	402	\$940,648.54
Total	5,814	1,428	\$5,032,076.30

Notes:

- Refugee Re-Establishment Grants include Re-Establishment Refugee (Accommodation) and Re-Establishment Refugee (Other).
- Amount granted is not necessarily the amount spent.
- A client can receive multiple Refugee Re-Establishment grants in any given period. A client can also appear across multiple periods.
- The total for the number of clients will differ when adding up the totals of each calendar year as a client can receive a grant across multiple calendar years.
- A client can receive both Re-Establishment Refugee (Accommodation) and Re-Establishment Refugee (Other).
- A total maximum of \$5000 can be paid for the qualifying person and their immediate family. A client can receive multiple grants to make up the maximum amount.
- Within that total maximum of \$5000, a maximum of \$3500 can be paid for accommodation costs.
- When the applicant has more than 2 dependent children, the maximum of \$5000 is increased by \$100 for each additional dependent child.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a horizontal line.

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services