



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**  
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

26 May 2026

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act Request**

Thank you for your email of 24 April 2026 to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry), requesting information about the reasons for food grant declines at the Newtown service centre and the number of food grant applications at the front desk that are neither granted or declined.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Please refer to the attached **Appendix** for the following information:

- **Table One:** The number of applications for a food Special Needs Grant (SNG) granted and declined in Newtown service centre during the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2025 broken down by calendar year and months
- **Table Two:** The number of applications for a food Special Needs Grant (SNG) declined in Newtown service centre during the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2025 broken down by calendar year and reason of decline.

All requests for hardship assistance such as food grants should be recorded within a client's record, however this requires interaction with a staff member. As our appointment system is separate to our client record system (CMS) and does not record specific details on the reason for an appointment, if a client chooses to leave before being seen there may not have been enough interaction to record the request in CMS, such as what the client wished to apply for. Notes should be added to the record about the departure, and our appointment system will record the non-attendance, however we are unable to collate the number of these that were for food grants without examining individual client records.

Your request for the number of people who present themselves to the Newtown service centre to apply for a food grant, and whether they were neither granted nor declined, is refused 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.

It is important to note that people walk in to Work and Income service centres for a variety of reasons, including:

- Food grants
- Power disconnection or arrears
- Employment assistance
- Emergency Housing
- Submission of information or documents
- General queries

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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



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Anna Graham  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**