



5 March 2025

Tēnā koe Adam Irish,

Official Information Act request

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) transferred part of your Official Information request to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) on 12 February 2025, regarding support available for refugees.

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

Whether refugees are eligible for social welfare upon arrival and, if so: The types of support available. The average annual cost of this support per refugee.

The Ministry works alongside 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.

If a former refugee, protected person, Afghan Interpreter or Afghan evacuee, who does not qualify for other forms of government assistance that are not

provided by the Ministry, may be paid a Special Needs grant 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](http://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

Your request for '*The average annual cost of this support per refugee*', is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you had requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

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

pp. 

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services