



NEW ZEALAND  
IMMIGRATION

# Information for Convention Refugees

AUGUST 2022

This document supports the video 'Convention Refugees – settling into New Zealand'. It has information about agencies and services mentioned in the video which you can watch below.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuxqfnD-WsA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuxqfnD-WsA)

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## Definitions

<b>Claim</b>	An application or appeal for refugee or protected person status in New Zealand
<b>Claimant</b>	A person who has applied for refugee or protected person status and whose claim or appeal has not been finally decided
<b>Convention refugee</b>	A claimant who has been recognised as a refugee in New Zealand by the Refugee Status Unit or the Immigration and Protection Tribunal

Convention refugees are entitled to access a range of public and support services in New Zealand. Your entitlements may depend on your visa status.

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## Interpreters

You may want to use an interpreter for important tasks, such as seeing a doctor or visiting a government agency. Language Line is a free telephone interpreting service that you can use. To use an interpreter, visit or call the government agency that you want to talk to and ask for Language Line.

[ethniccommunities.govt.nz/story/how-language-line-works](http://ethniccommunities.govt.nz/story/how-language-line-works)

[languageline.govt.nz](http://languageline.govt.nz)

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## Getting help – general

Convention refugees are eligible for certain support services. To access these services you may need to show your letter from INZ or the Immigration and Protection Tribunal confirming that you have been recognised as a refugee or protected person. Some agencies have an agreement with INZ to check your status. Otherwise, a provider agency can contact the Refugee Status Unit to confirm your status. You may need to give your permission for this:

Refugee Status Unit: 09 928 2237

[RSU@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:RSU@mbie.govt.nz)

[immigration.govt.nz/audiences/supporting-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/asylum-seekers](http://immigration.govt.nz/audiences/supporting-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/asylum-seekers)

INZ 8630 AUG22



MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,  
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT  
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Government

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## Identity

To access many services you are likely to need an identity document. Usually a passport is sufficient to establish your identity. If you do not have a passport, you will need to obtain a Certificate of Identity (COI):

[passports.govt.nz/what-you-need-to-renew-or-apply-for-a-passport/certificate-of-identity-or-refugee-travel-document](https://passports.govt.nz/what-you-need-to-renew-or-apply-for-a-passport/certificate-of-identity-or-refugee-travel-document)

**Certificate of Identity** – The Department of Internal Affairs (“DIA”) can issue you a COI if you are not a New Zealand citizen, you live in New Zealand, and you cannot get a passport from your country of citizenship. A Certificate of Identity is valid for a maximum of 2 years.

**Refugee Travel Document** – DIA can issue this to you to allow you to travel if you are not a New Zealand citizen and you are confirmed as a refugee. A Refugee Travel Document is valid for a maximum of 5 years.

An **INZ issued COI** is mainly to show your visa. It has limited use and validity outside of immigration purposes.

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## Permanent Residency

As a Convention refugee you are eligible to apply for permanent residence. This will allow you to live in New Zealand indefinitely, so it is important that you apply for this as soon as you can. To apply you will need to fill out a Residence Application form: [immigration.govt.nz/documents/forms-and-guides/inz1000.pdf](https://immigration.govt.nz/documents/forms-and-guides/inz1000.pdf)

When asked what category you are applying under, tick the “Other” box and write “Refugee and Protection”. Send your completed application to:

**Immigration New Zealand**  
**P O Box 76895**  
**Manukau City 2241**  
**Auckland**

INZ will waive fees for residence applications from Convention refugees. However, you will need to pay any medical costs associated with the application. Your spouse and dependent children off-shore should be included in the residence application to enable them to travel to and live in New Zealand.

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## Work visa

After you have been recognised as a refugee and you are waiting for your residence visa to be decided, you may be eligible for a work visa. This will allow you to gain employment and support yourself. To apply for a work visa you will need to complete a work visa application form.

[immigration.govt.nz/documents/forms-and-guides/inz1015.pdf](https://immigration.govt.nz/documents/forms-and-guides/inz1015.pdf)

Tick the box “Refugee or protection status claimant” on page three and state that you are a Convention refugee. There is no fee to apply for this work visa. Send your completed application to:

**Immigration New Zealand**  
**P O Box 76895**  
**Manukau City 2241**  
**Auckland**

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## Family sponsorship

You may be able to sponsor other family members (not spouses or dependents) to live in New Zealand permanently. Visit our page on Refugee Family Support Category for more information.

[immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/apply-for-a-visa/about-visa/refugee-family-support-resident-visa](https://immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/apply-for-a-visa/about-visa/refugee-family-support-resident-visa)

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## Immigration Contact Centre

For help with visas and other immigration matters, contact the INZ Contact Centre: **0508 55 88 55**.

[immigration.govt.nz/contact](https://immigration.govt.nz/contact)

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## Finding work

If you are granted a work visa, you will want to find a job. Websites like TradeMe and Seek list many work opportunities and are a good place to start. Careers New Zealand has a step by step guide to help you find work.

[trademe.co.nz/jobs](https://trademe.co.nz/jobs)

[seek.co.nz](https://seek.co.nz)

[careers.govt.nz/job-hunting/new-to-new-zealand/a-step-by-step-guide-to-finding-a-job-in-nz](https://careers.govt.nz/job-hunting/new-to-new-zealand/a-step-by-step-guide-to-finding-a-job-in-nz)

The *New Zealand Red Cross* offers the Pathways to Employment programme to assist Convention refugees find work:

[redcross.org.nz/what-we-do/in-new-zealand/refugee-programmes/pathways-employment](https://redcross.org.nz/what-we-do/in-new-zealand/refugee-programmes/pathways-employment)

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## Tax number and a bank account

You will need a tax number from Inland Revenue if you want to work in New Zealand, or receive a benefit from Work and Income. To get this number you first need to open a New Zealand bank account. Most banks will require:

- › Two forms of identity. Examples are a passport, a driver's licence or a birth certificate.
- › Proof of your address. Examples are a letter from a government agency or a service provider (for example an electricity or water company).

After you have opened a New Zealand bank account, you can then apply for a tax number from Inland Revenue.

[govt.nz/browse/tax-benefits-and-finance/ird-numbers/get-an-ird-number](https://govt.nz/browse/tax-benefits-and-finance/ird-numbers/get-an-ird-number)

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## Income and other assistance

If you are unable to support yourself financially, you may be eligible for assistance from the Ministry of Social Development. For more information contact your local Work and Income branch.

[workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/contact-us/find-a-service-centre](https://workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/contact-us/find-a-service-centre)

[workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/emergency-benefit/refugee-or-protection-claimant-01](https://workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/emergency-benefit/refugee-or-protection-claimant-01)

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## Workers' rights

Every worker in New Zealand has legal rights. For example you must be given a written employment agreement and be paid at least the minimum wage. You can learn about minimum rights at Employment New Zealand.

[employment.govt.nz/minimum-rights-of-employees](https://employment.govt.nz/minimum-rights-of-employees)

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## Accommodation

If you need accommodation you can find houses, apartments and individual rooms to rent on TradeMe. If you are having difficulty finding somewhere to live, you may be eligible for financial or other help. For more information contact your local Work and Income branch.

[trademe.co.nz/property](https://trademe.co.nz/property)

[workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/contact-us/find-a-service-centre](https://workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/contact-us/find-a-service-centre)

[hnzc.co.nz](https://hnzc.co.nz)

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## Education

All children between the age of 6 and 16 must attend school in New Zealand. You can find schools near you at Education Counts.

[educationcounts.govt.nz/find-school](https://educationcounts.govt.nz/find-school)

[education.govt.nz/school/student-support/refugee-background-students](https://education.govt.nz/school/student-support/refugee-background-students)

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## Health

New Zealand has a public health system that reduces the cost of most health care but it is not free. Claimants and Convention refugees are eligible for this. You must bring your letter from INZ confirming that you have a current claim or have been recognised as a refugee.

The Ministry of Health website has a guide to eligibility funded health and disability services for claimants, refugees and protected persons.

[health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/eligibility-publicly-funded-health-services/guide-eligibility-publicly-funded-health-services/refugees-and-protected-persons](https://health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/eligibility-publicly-funded-health-services/guide-eligibility-publicly-funded-health-services/refugees-and-protected-persons)

If you are living in Auckland you will find included in this pack a pamphlet on primary care which has a list of doctors ("General Practices" or "GP") who offer discounted services to claimants and refugees. You should enrol with a GP near where you live.

If you need urgent medical care, call 111 and ask for an ambulance.

For more information about accessing New Zealand's healthcare system visit New Zealand Now:

[newzealandnow.govt.nz/living-in-nz/healthcare/healthcare-services](https://newzealandnow.govt.nz/living-in-nz/healthcare/healthcare-services)

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## English language

You can register for English classes if you need them. You can find English Language course providers near you on New Zealand Now:

[newzealandnow.govt.nz/live-in-new-zealand/english-language/find-an-english-language-class](https://newzealandnow.govt.nz/live-in-new-zealand/english-language/find-an-english-language-class)

Or visit English Language Partners: [englishlanguage.org.nz](https://englishlanguage.org.nz)

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## Driving

For information about driver licences or for questions about driver registrations, seat belt safety, car registration, and warrant of fitness, contact the NZ Transport Agency.

Website: [nzta.govt.nz](https://nzta.govt.nz)

For Motor vehicle licensing and registrations call: **0800 10 88 09**

For driver licensing call: **0800 82 24 22**

### Refugee Driver Programme

If you're a Convention refugee with a learners licence you may be eligible for our Open Road driver training programme. To join you must:

- › Have reasonable English
- › Have a valid New Zealand Learners Licence
- › Be available for 2-3 hours per week over 12-16 weeks

For more information about the programme in your area contact our Open Road Driver Training Coordinators:

- › **Auckland** – Phone: **09 262 9042** or **027 581 5126** | Email: [rdtauckland@redcross.org.nz](mailto:rdtauckland@redcross.org.nz)
- › **Palmerston North** – Phone: **06 356 8152** or **021 0842 0780** | Email: [poe.zaw@redcross.org.nz](mailto:poe.zaw@redcross.org.nz)
- › **Nelson** – Phone: **021 255 8550** | Email: [rdtnelson@redcross.org.nz](mailto:rdtnelson@redcross.org.nz)
- › **Dunedin** – Phone: **03 477 1527** or **027 576 4743** | Email: [rddunedin@redcross.org.nz](mailto:rddunedin@redcross.org.nz)

[immigration.govt.nz/drivingmentor](http://immigration.govt.nz/drivingmentor)

## Settlement support services

### Government

New Zealand Now is an official government website about life in New Zealand. It has lots of useful, reliable information and tips about finding work, employment rights, adjusting to a new country, money and tax, healthcare, education, recreation, learning English and more. It also has a directory to help you find local information in your particular area. [newzealandnow.govt.nz](http://newzealandnow.govt.nz)

### Important Organisations

A number of organisations support claimants and Convention refugees to access services and settle into New Zealand.

### National Organisations

#### Citizens Advice Bureau

The Citizens Advice Bureau offers advice and assistance to migrants called Migrant Connect: [cab.org.nz/gethelp](http://cab.org.nz/gethelp)  
They also offer a free interpreter service called Language Connect: [cab.org.nz/languageconnect](http://cab.org.nz/languageconnect)

#### Community law

Community law can provide free initial legal advice to resolve problems to people with limited resources.  
[communitylaw.org.nz/free-legal-help/eligibility](http://communitylaw.org.nz/free-legal-help/eligibility)

#### Red Cross

The New Zealand Red Cross offer a range of support services to Convention refugee including the Pathways to Employment programme.

[redcross.org.nz/what-we-do/in-new-zealand/refugee-programmes](http://redcross.org.nz/what-we-do/in-new-zealand/refugee-programmes)

[redcross.org.nz/what-we-do/in-new-zealand/refugee-programmes/pathways-employment](http://redcross.org.nz/what-we-do/in-new-zealand/refugee-programmes/pathways-employment)

### Regional groups and organisations

#### Auckland

**Asylum Seekers Support Trust** – provides accommodation and support services for asylum seekers in Auckland.

Website: [aucklandrefugeecouncil.org](http://aucklandrefugeecouncil.org)

Email [clientservices@asst.org.nz](mailto:clientservices@asst.org.nz)

Phone: **(09) 828 6067**

**Auckland Regional Migrant Service** – provides information, advice and can refer you to other support services.

[settlement.org.nz](http://settlement.org.nz)

**Refugees As Survivors New Zealand** – offers counselling and body therapy. [rasnz.co.nz](http://rasnz.co.nz)

**Refugee Council of New Zealand** – provides advice, information and assistance to claimants and refugees. [rc.org.nz](http://rc.org.nz)

## Waikato/Hamilton

**Settlement Centre Waikato** (formerly Waikato Migrant Resource Centre) – helps newcomers to find their way to a successful settlement in Hamilton and the Waikato area.

Website: [scw.org.nz/contact](https://scw.org.nz/contact)

Phone: (07) 853 2192

Email: [info@scw.org.nz](mailto:info@scw.org.nz)

Address: 46G Boundary Road, Hamilton

## Wellington

**ChangeMakers Refugee Forum** – assists people from refugee background through advocacy and community development. [crf.org.nz](https://crf.org.nz)

**Refugee Trauma Recovery** – provides specialist mental health services for victims of torture in association with the Red Cross. [redcross.org.nz/what-we-do/in-new-zealand/refugee-programmes/refugee-trauma-recovery](https://redcross.org.nz/what-we-do/in-new-zealand/refugee-programmes/refugee-trauma-recovery)

## Christchurch

**Christchurch Resettlement Service** – supports people from refugee and migrant backgrounds living in Christchurch to settle successfully in New Zealand.

Website: [crs.org.nz](https://crs.org.nz)

Phone: +64 (03) 335 0311

Email: [admin@crs.org.nz](mailto:admin@crs.org.nz)

Address: Level 1, 283 Lincoln Road, Addington, Christchurch 8024

