



NAVIGATING LIFE IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

A GUIDE FOR NEW ASYLUM SEEKERS

www.asst.org.nz



2025

INTRODUCTION

What does ASST do?



Welcome to the Asylum Seekers Support Trust (ASST). We are an organisation that supports people seeking asylum in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our goal is that every person seeking asylum is welcomed and supported so that they can thrive.

ASST provides free support in a few key areas of your journey seeking asylum and living life in Aotearoa New Zealand. Some of the aspects of life we can support you with, include:

- Filling out visa forms, Please note that we cannot give immigration advice.
- Accessing welfare support entitlements.
- Applying for English classes
- A food programme.
- Assist with organising a bank account and tax number in New Zealand.
- Helping enrol your children in school.
- Help register you with a doctor.
- Connecting you to other support services, such as mental health services.

In this booklet we go into more detail about these services.

If you have a need beyond our services, we can help connect you to the appropriate organisations or people who have the resources for your specific need.

What is an asylum seeker or refugee claimant?

Seeking asylum is a human right under international law and the law of Aotearoa New Zealand. An asylum seeker in Aotearoa New Zealand, is a person who:

- Is outside their home country and
- Is seeking recognition of their refugee status for protection in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Due to a well founded fear of persecution in their home country and
- Has submitted a claim for recognition as a refugee to the Refugee Status Unit (RSU), part of Immigration New Zealand (INZ)

While your claim for asylum is being considered by the RSU, you are seeking asylum and known as an 'asylum seeker'.

Sometimes, asylum seekers are referred to as an "asylum claimant" or a "refugee claimant." These all mean you are making a claim for asylum to be recognised as a refugee and you are waiting for a decision from the RSU.



How a refugee/asylum claim is made in Aotearoa New Zealand and how can ASST help?

In Aotearoa New Zealand, refugee/asylum claims are made by an application made to the Refugee Status Unit (RSU).

This can be done by:

- legal representatives such as lawyers
- or immigration advisors
- or by you

When you begin your refugee/asylum claim, you will be referred to as 'the claimant'.

ASST does not provide legal advice or legal representation. We support you and your journey starting life in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Please find more information on the refugee claim process [here](#).

**[https://www.immigration.govt.nz/
live/refugees-and-asylum-
seeker-information/claiming-
refugee-or-protected-person-
status/](https://www.immigration.govt.nz/live/refugees-and-asylum-seeker-information/claiming-refugee-or-protected-person-status/)**



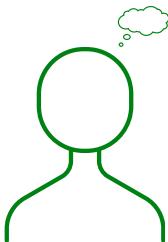
Where are you in the process?

You have made an asylum claim to the RSU to be recognised as a refugee and are awaiting a decision.

You are able to remain in the country while awaiting this decision by the RSU. You are currently an asylum seeker and in the process to be recognised as a refugee.

If your asylum claim is successful and you are recognised as a refugee, you will be granted 'convention refugee' status.

A convention refugee is someone who claims asylum once they're in the country.



You don't have to tell anyone why you are seeking asylum. The only people who can request this information from you are the RSU and your lawyer. If you have a lawyer, it is good to check with them before you give any information about your asylum claim.

ASST's Provision of Support

Visas

It is important that you have valid visa at all times in order to access entitlements.

If you have a visa, it is also important that you do not let it expire. **Before** it expires, you should submit an application for a new visa. No one will remind you that your visa is about to expire. Visas should be applied for around one month prior the previous visa expiry. So, please ease regularly check your expiry date of your visas, so that you do not miss this.



Refugee claimants are eligible to apply for temporary visas, including visitor, student and work visas based on their status as an asylum seeker. In most cases, the following visas are applied for based on age:

Visitor visa: Children under the age of 5 years

Student visa: Ages 5 to 18 years

Work visa: 18+ years

Babies born in New Zealand

If your child is born in New Zealand, and you (as the parent) have a visa at the time of their birth, your child automatically has a visa. The type of visa the child is given depends on the visas you have when the child is born.

Immigration New Zealand recommends that you ask them for a statement of your child's immigration status to confirm the type and duration of the visa they are entitled to hold. You can do this on the website below, or ask for support from ASST: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/formshelp/request-personal-information-on-behalf/>

ASST can assist you with filling in your form for a visa application for free. However, we cannot give you advice about your visa. Please note that if your situation is complex, you will require legal advice and the expertise of a lawyer or immigration advisor, which may cost money. Always ask your lawyer or immigration advisor about the fees they charge for advising you in advance.

If you would like help from ASST, Please let us know your visa is about to expire at least one month before its expiry date. Your visas are typically emailed to you.

If your current visa expires, and your visa application is still processing with Immigration New Zealand (INZ) INZ will automatically issue an interim visa for you. An interim visa has the same conditions as your previous work, student or visitor visa. If you are worried, you may call INZ or ask an ASST staff member for help.

If your visa has expired:

If your visa has expired, please see your lawyer or contact ASST and we can put you in touch with someone who may be able to help

How Your Visa Affects Your Entitlements

Please note: Accredited Employer Work Visas are not treated the same as Asylum Seeker Open Work Visas. You may not be eligible for these entitlements.

	Active Refugee/Asylum Claim with no visa	Active Refugee/Asylum Claim with visitor visa or student visa	Active Refugee/Asylum Claim with work visa
Bank account	Not eligible	Eligible to open account with visa and claim letter	Eligible to open account with visa and claim letter
IRD (tax number)	Not eligible	Eligible for IRD number with visa, proof of benefit and claim letter	Eligible for IRD number with work visa and claim letter

	Active Refugee/Asylum Claim with no visa	Active Refugee/Asylum Claim with visitor visa or student visa	Active Refugee/Asylum Claim with work visa
Healthcare (hospitals, GP)	<p>Claimant and immediate family eligible for free healthcare from any public hospital and some funded clinics (see listhere for Auckland, confirmation of claim letter required)</p> <p>-link can be found in healthcare section below</p> <p>For GP services outside of Auckland email: refugeeemigranthealth@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz</p>	<p>Claimant and immediate family eligible for free healthcare from any public hospital and some funded clinics (see listhere for Auckland, confirmation of claim letter required)</p> <p>link can be found in healthcare section below</p> <p>For GP services outside of Auckland email: refugeeemigranthealth@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz</p>	<p>Claimant and immediate family eligible for free healthcare from any public hospital and some funded clinics (see listhere for Auckland, confirmation of claim letter required)</p> <p>link can be found in healthcare section below</p> <p>For GP services outside of Auckland email: refugeeemigranthealth@TeWhatuOra.govt.nz</p>
Mental health	Eligible for free support from Refugees as Survivors NZ and other mental health organisations (usually dependent on referrals)	Eligible for free support from Refugees as Survivors NZ and other mental health organisations (usually dependent on referrals)	Eligible for free support from Refugees as Survivors NZ and other mental health organisations (usually dependent on referrals)
Schooling (children)	Not eligible to attend school.	Considered domestic students (with any valid visa)	Considered domestic students (with any valid visa)
Tertiary education (university)	Not eligible to attend tertiary education	Considered domestic student (with confirmation of claim and current visa) must pay study fees upfront, not eligible for student allowance or loan.	Considered domestic student (with confirmation of claim and current visa) must pay study fees upfront, not eligible for student allowance or loan.
English classes (ESOL)	May be eligible for free English classes (confirmation of claim letter required)	Eligible for free English classes (confirmation of claim required)	Eligible for free English classes (confirmation of claim required)
Housing	Not eligible for social housing	<p>Eligible for social housing if on a welfare benefit.</p> <p>Not eligible for emergency housing.</p> <p>Can request support from Work & Income to find rental property.</p>	<p>Eligible for social housing if on a welfare benefit.</p> <p>Not eligible for emergency housing</p> <p>Can request support from Work & Income to find rental property.</p>
Welfare benefits (financial support)	<p>Not eligible for any benefit.</p> <p>Eligible for Community Services Card if meet hardship threshold.</p>	<p>Eligible for Emergency Benefit (must have valid visa).</p> <p>Eligible for Temporary Additional Support (similar to Accommodation Supplement).</p> <p>Eligible for Family Tax Credits if on a benefit and have children under 18.</p> <p>Eligible for Community Services Card.</p>	<p>Eligible for Emergency Benefit (must have valid visa).</p> <p>Eligible for Temporary Additional Support (similar to Accommodation Supplement).</p> <p>Eligible for Family Tax Credits if on a benefit and have children under 18.</p> <p>Eligible for Community Services Card.</p>
Employment (jobs)	<p>Not legally allowed to work.</p> <p>Not eligible for employment support</p>	<p>Not legally allowed to work (unless your student visa has work conditions)</p> <p>Eligible for Red Cross Pathways to Employment Support (must be receiving a benefit from Work and Income)</p> <p>Can access support and information from Career Services</p>	<p>Legally allowed to work</p> <p>Eligible for Red Cross Pathways to Employment Support (must be receiving a benefit from Work and Income)</p> <p>Can access support and information from Career Services</p>
Language support	Eligible for free interpreter support when accessing public services such as healthcare	Eligible for free interpreter support when accessing public services such as healthcare, Work and Income	Eligible for free interpreter support when accessing public services such as healthcare, Work and Income

Identity Document

It is very important to have an identity document in New Zealand. To access services, you may need an identity document (ID). Usually, your passport is enough to prove your identity with most organisations.

Certificate of Identity

If you do not have a passport, your passport is expired, or your passport is lost, you are able to apply for a Certificate of Identity (COI) from the Department of Internal Affairs. A COI will have your photograph and biographical details such as your name and date of birth. INZ can issue a visa into a COI. Other agencies such as Work and Income and banks will also accept a COI as proof of identity.

Please ask us if you have any questions about a Certificate of Identity.

Bank account

It is important to open a bank account as soon as possible in order to access income, pay bills and as a form of identification.

This can be done online through bank websites such as BNZ, ASB or Kiwibank.

To open a New Zealand bank account you need to provide:

-  A valid identification such as an overseas passport
-  Proof of address (this can be a tenancy/rental agreement, confirmation of claim letter, written letter from the person you are living with)
-  Proof of valid visa (visa letter)
-  Confirmation of Claim Letter (if on visitor visa)

IRD numbers

IRD numbers are essential in NZ, this is how you pay tax. You can apply for IRD numbers by going to an IRD office .

When you go to the IRD office, take with you these documents:

- If you have a work visa: A bank account statement, form of identification, proof of address, overseas tax number (if applicable).
- Have a visitor, student or interim visa:: A bank account statement, form of identification, proof of address, overseas tax number (if applicable) and proof of WINZ benefit.

Government Welfare/Benefit Applications

New Zealand has a welfare system under the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). The Department of Work and Income, provides welfare payments to low or no income people. These payments are designed to be temporary, and for people who are seeking employment. These payments are often called 'benefits'.

ASST provides help with benefit applications. All applications go to our government welfare department called Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ).

Asylum Seekers may be able to get four kinds of financial support from the government:

- Emergency Benefit
- Temporary Additional Support (for rental costs)
- Family Tax Credits (for families with children under 18 only)
- Payment of Bond (landlord must be registered with MSD)

Please note: you do not need an IRD number to be granted a benefit. You can temporarily receive the benefit before getting an IRD number, but you should apply for IRD as soon as you can.

How much, and which support you receive depends on your circumstances such as rent, number of children, food and car costs.

Work and Income support is asset tested. This means you must show WINZ your evidence of cash assets (money in bank or hand) or non-cash assets both here and back home. A non-cash asset for example, can be a house that you own but do not live in. All of this will be considered for the amount of benefit money you receive weekly.

It is important to be open and truthful with WINZ about the money you are currently receiving here and from back home. If WINZ discovers that you have not previously been truthful, you may be asked to pay money back.



Your steps to claim a benefit (ASST can help you with this)

1. Request a 9 digit client number from WINZ [here](#) (this is different from your Immigration client number)
2. Register your WINZ client number and create a pin to make a [MyMSD account](#)
3. Fill out a physical benefit form including the temporary additional support (if applicable). Come to ASST and we will help you fill this form out.
4. Fill an appointment of agent form, if you would like ASST to act on your behalf in phone calls or resolving issues.
5. You then book an appointment at your nearest WINZ office, but ask us if you want some assistance with speaking on the phone.
6. Attend the appointment with your:
 - a. proof of bank account

- b. tenancy agreement (or other proof of address)
- c. passport
- d. Valid visa
- e. confirmation of claim letter
- f. Benefit application
- g. Appointment of agent form

7. The benefit should be calculated and they will tell you when you will receive the benefit (1-2 weeks).
8. If WINZ requests additional documents, please either upload them onto your MyMSD account or contact ASST for assistance.

Please remember at WINZ you must show them your confirmation of asylum claim letter. Your WINZ case manager might ask you why you are here seeking asylum. You are not obliged to tell them any details.

Important Obligations: When you are receiving a benefit, it is important to adhere to your obligations. Usually, this means you must be actively applying for jobs, and ensuring you are becoming 'work ready'.

Community Services Card

A community services card is automatically issued to you if you get a benefit. You can also access it if you are earning under a certain amount of money (or are visaless and can prove hardship). The Community Services Card can reduce the cost of:

- visits to a health practitioner (e.g. a doctor or nurse) if you're enrolled at their practice (for yourself, and your dependent children aged 14-17)
- subsidised prescriptions - these are free if you have a Community Services Card
- partially or unsubsidised prescriptions, or prescriptions from private specialists
- fares for public transport including trains, buses and some ferries
- fees for after-hours health practitioner visits





- glasses for children under 16
- emergency dental care provided by:
 - hospitals, and
 - approved dental contractors (ask the dental provider if they are an approved contractor)
- travel and accommodation for treatment at a public hospital you've been referred to outside your area:
 - at least 80 km away for adults
 - at least 25 km for children
- help from a carer at home for medical issues.



Food Programme

We provide weekly food boxes to asylum seeker individuals and families in Auckland. Please contact us to see if you can receive these food boxes.

Our food boxes are based on food donation and we cannot always guarantee the quality or quantity of the food box contents. If you want to join our food programme, please let us know if you have any religious dietary restrictions, such as eating halal, vegetarian or any allergies. Please also note that our food programme has a limited capacity as we cannot give food boxes to all of our clients. Those who do not have any income have priority on the list.



It is important to understand the difference between expiry date and best before date. In New Zealand, a lot of food has a "best before" date. This food is still suitable for eating after this date. The best way to ensure it is good to eat, is by smelling and looking at the food. Below is an image explaining this difference.

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Healthcare

Asylum seekers are entitled to publicly funded healthcare. This means you may go to a medical clinic or the hospital at a low cost or for free. It is important to show your claim letter to prove eligibility. This is a list of medical clinics who will provide free medical consultations.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, we have General Practitioner Doctors, called GPs, who work in medical clinics in the community. When you have a non-urgent medical issue, you go to the GP first and if necessary, they will refer you to a specialist. You should register with a GP so that you can see them when you need non-urgent medical care or advice.

The GP can provide interpreters, but you must tell them you need one in advance.

If you have any problems with GP enrollments or you are paying a lot of money to see a GP, please contact someone at ASST and we can help.

If you have an emergency, you should dial 111 for the ambulance. You can also go to the accident and emergency department (A&E) at the hospital by yourself. This is free.

Please note that you may be charged for an ambulance.



Dental Care

Dental care is free for children under the age of 18. Please contact your child's school, or search for your location's local dentist online.

Dental care for adults is expensive in New Zealand, but can be discounted by providing your Community Services Card.

Maternity and Newborn Care

If you are pregnant, you are eligible for publicly funded maternity care. This includes support from a Midwife, healthcare relating to pregnancy and giving birth in hospital. You can contact your GP for more information about maternity care.

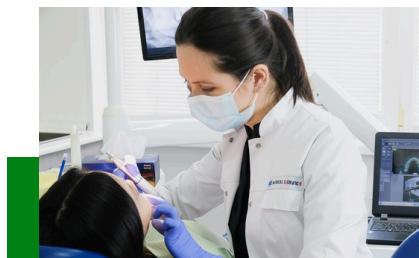
Once your baby is born, or if you have a young child, you are able to access support from Plunket. Plunket is an organisation specialised in caring for mothers and babies, they provide free check ups, support and information, usually from nurses. You can find out more here: <https://www.plunket.org.nz/>

Mental health

ASST understands that our clients have all kinds of experiences and come from all kinds of backgrounds. ASST is a safe and non-judgemental place for you to come to and ask to be connected to mental health support.

It is really important to look after your mental health and seek support or treatment. Taking care of your mental health is very important to help you through your asylum claim process.

Help and support is possible. A good first person to speak to about support is your GP. If you need more information about support services, please contact ASST.



Mental health support numbers National helplines

The services listed in this section are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week unless otherwise specified

◆ Need to talk?

Free call or text **1737** any time for support from a trained counsellor

📞 Lifeline

0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE)

Free text **4357** (HELP)

>Youthline

0800 376 633

Free text **234**

Email: talk@youthline.co.nz

Online chat available

👉 Samaritans

0800 726 666

⚠️ Suicide Crisis Helpline

0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)

Depression Helpline

0800 111 757

Free text **4202**

Talk to a trained counsellor

😢 Anxiety NZ

0800 269 4389 (0800 ANXIETY)

🏥 Healthline

0800 611 116

Health advice from professional providers



English classes

Free English classes are available for asylum seekers including at:

- English Language Partners (ELP)
- Refugee Education for Adults and Families (REAF)
- Auckland University of Technology (AUT)

If you would like to enrol in English classes, please let ASST know and we can help you enrol.

School and early childhood education (kindergarten) enrolments

- Asylum seeker children are allowed to attend school as domestic students for free from age 5 to 18.
- Children under the age of 6 can attend early childhood education, also known as kindergarten or daycare. Children 3 years and over can receive 20 hours free care. Please note, care for more hours, and children under 3 comes with a cost.
- It is important to show schools your confirmation of asylum claim letter, and the visa for your child.
- Any visa is acceptable for schools – visitor, interim or student visa.
- Some schools have a social worker assigned to them to help children who are in particular need of support, they are called SWIS (Social Worker In Schools). They maybe be able to help you find school uniforms, books and maybe even technology that is required at school.
- If you need support enrolling your child into school, please contact ASST.

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- Any visa is acceptable for schools – visitor, interim or student visa.
- Some schools have a social worker assigned to them to help children who are in particular need of support, they are called SWIS (Social Worker In Schools). They maybe be able to help you find school uniforms, books and maybe even technology that is required at school.
- If you need support enrolling your child into school, please contact ASST.

Tertiary education (University)

Asylum seekers with valid visas can go to university and pay domestic student fees. However, all fees will have to be paid in advance. Asylum seekers cannot get a student allowance or student loan, however students are eligible for a welfare benefit.

Language support

When contacting a government agency, either in person or over the phone, you can ask for the help of an interpreter and let the government agent know what language you speak. Telephone/video interpreters are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in over 180 languages.

You can use this service when speaking to government agencies and service providers, including: Immigration, Health, Inland Revenue, Internal Affairs, Education, Work and Income, Career Services and the Police.

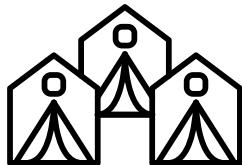


Steps in the asylum claim

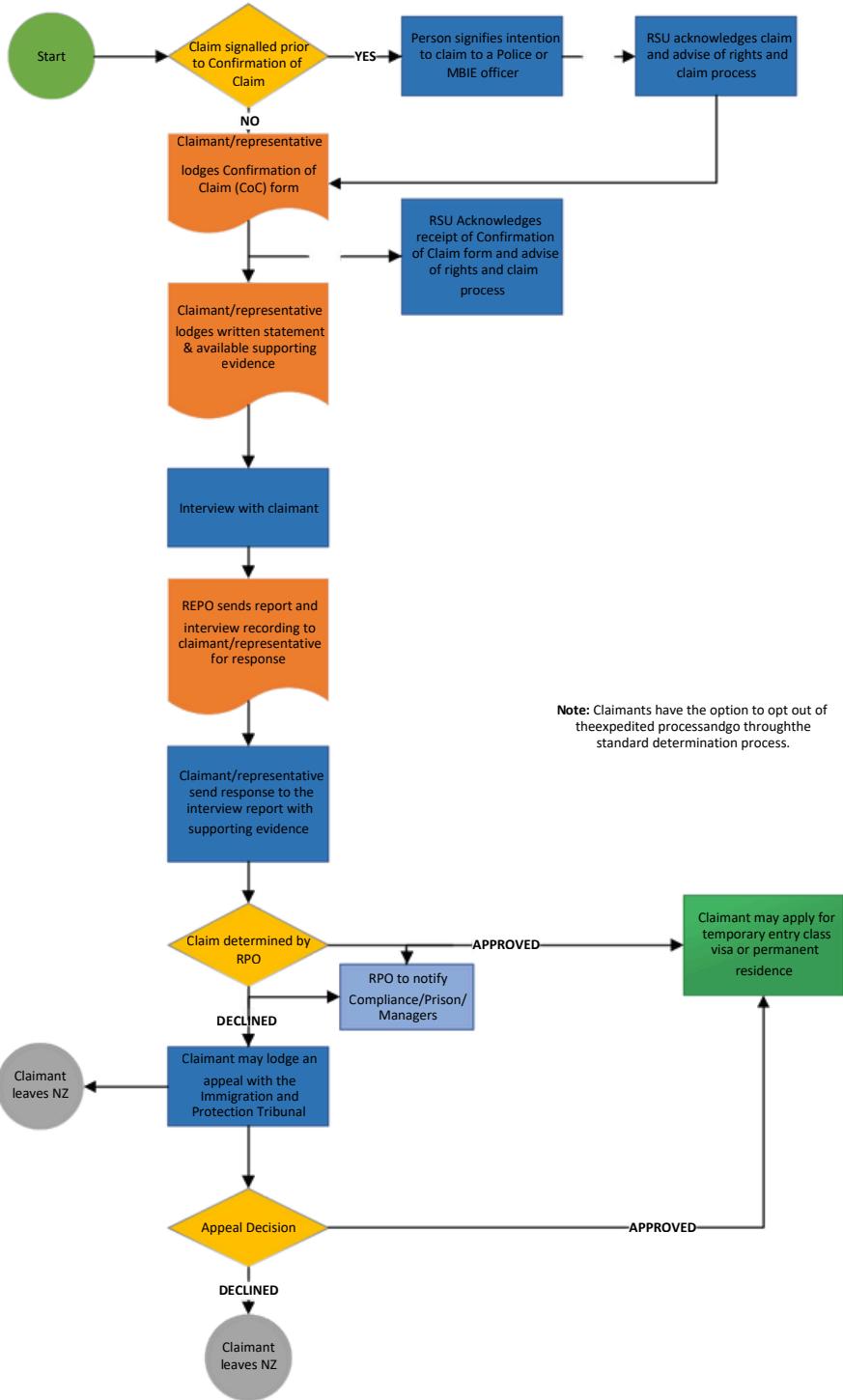
The asylum claim process

The asylum claim process is currently a very long process. Your asylum claim will be assessed by the unit in INZ called the Refugee Status Unit (RSU). From a claim being submitted to the RSU, to receiving an RSU decision takes approximately one to three years. You can find a lawyer to help you with this process or you can do this on your own. Current processing timeframes are found on the INZ website [here](#), but, please note, these are always subject to change. Unfortunately, there is a lot of uncertainty in the asylum claim process.

The claim process is outlined in the chart on next page.



Refugee and Protection Detainee Claim Process Map with Timeframes



Funding for lawyers

There are many refugee lawyers who can provide their services for free under a category called legal aid. It is a grant, so not a free gift or a loan. Sometimes, repayment is required and payment plans can be sorted out to help with repayment. Lawyers apply for legal aid with you, the claimant. If approved, legal aid will fund the essential services for your asylum claim process. This funding does not cover visa applications, or appeal fees, which must be paid for by the applicant.

The role of lawyers is to provide the essential legal guidance and representation for those seeking asylum in Aotearoa New Zealand. Everything you say to a lawyer is strictly confidential. They are able to provide independence advice and guidance throughout the asylum claim process, from the initial claim submission, through to providing representation at Refugee Status Unit interviews, and appeals at the Immigration and Protection Tribunal.

However, it is important to understand that it is your asylum claim. Make sure your lawyer has all the information and documents they ask for you to give them as promptly as you can. You know your own situation and lawyers act on the information you give them.

It is important to keep your lawyer up to date with any change or development in your circumstances so they can advise you. This can also include, if it is safe for you to do, keeping them up to date on what is happening in your home country.

Asylum Seekers Support Trust can assist with filling visa application forms, but in no way can we advise or recommend what should be written. We cannot give legal advice. If you want a lawyer but do not have one, ASST can provide a list of lawyers for you to choose from.



Accessing Local Resources

Public transport

Most places in New Zealand have a network of buses and trains that run frequently. They can be slightly unreliable. If you have a community services card, gold card (for people aged 65+ years), or a student ID you can get a discount on public transport costs.



Finding a job

To find a job, you can usually apply online. There are many employment websites which advertise many jobs, which you can apply for. The following are useful links to try:

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

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

<https://findajob.msd.govt.nz/>



“

We're not just helping them find work — we're helping them find their place in the world.

Job application documents

You must have a CV (resume) to apply for jobs. A CV is a document with your work history on it. It shows a potential employer your skills and experience. Please go to careers.govt.nz to find a CV template to use.

Along with a CV, you may also be asked to provide your visa and passport to a potential employer so they know you have working rights.

Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to get into the community, meet people and get some valuable Aotearoa New Zealand experience. The place you volunteer can help write you a reference for any future jobs that require one. As an asylum seeker, you are allowed to volunteer even if you don't have a work visa.

Here are some websites to find volunteering opportunities:

- <http://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/>
- <https://volunteeringauckland.org.nz/>
- <https://seekvolunteer.co.nz/>

Red Cross Pathways to Employment

The Red Cross' Pathways to Employment team helps people from refugee backgrounds plan their careers and find work. They can help

with job applications, career planning, training opportunities, CVs and cover letters, interview preparation, and connecting with employers. Please note, these jobs are often quite general, and will likely not be in your field of expertise or experience.

For more information, ask your ASST staff member or visit this website: redcross.org.nz/get-help/help-for-refugees/finding-a-job

Online Training Websites

- **Te Heke Mai** - Build a professional CV, set career goals, and gain valuable skills with Ruru – your personal mentor and AI-driven career coach.
- **Thrive** - Designed for recently displaced skilled professionals, get the most out of LinkedIn and LinkedIn Learning to secure your next role.
- **MSD Learning Planet** - Access 350 bite-sized courses to boost your work readiness and professional growth.
- **Digital Passport** - Learn digital, job ready and AI skills online, at your own pace, whenever you want. There are 3 levels of learning, starting with the basics like emails, through to the latest AI tools.
- **LinkedIn Learning** - Access over 20,000 online courses to help you to upskill or update your knowledge in your own time.
- **Umbrella Wellbeing** - Dive into over 40-bite sized modules designed to support you to strengthen your wellbeing.



ACC

ACC stands for Accident Compensation Corporation. It is a government programme that helps pay for treatment and support if you get injured in an accident in Aotearoa New Zealand, no matter who you are or how the injury happened. You can speak to a doctor at your GP or A&E/Hospital to apply for ACC support.



Justice of the Peace (JP)

In Aotearoa New Zealand, a JP stands for Justice of the Peace. JPs are volunteer community members who provide free, legally recognised services to the public. Find your nearest JP here: justiceoftheprofession.org.nz/Page/Search.

A JP's key responsibilities are:

- **Witnessing Signatures:** JPs witness signatures on legal documents, ensuring they are signed willingly and correctly.
- **Certifying Documents:** They certify copies of documents, confirming that they are true and accurate copies of the originals.
- **Taking Declarations and Affidavits:** JPs administer oaths and affirmations, and take statutory declarations and affidavits, which are legally binding statements.



Libraries



Libraries are a fantastic hub for community events, resources and entertainment. You can go to any library and register for a library card for free. Once you have a library card, you can access books, rent films, attend free community events and sometimes even English lessons. Libraries also have computers and printers for you to use.

There will be a library near you in most suburbs. They are run by the local council for your area.

For Auckland libraries, please visit [this website](#).

For Wellington libraries, please visit [this website](#).

For Hamilton libraries, please visit [this website](#).

For Christchurch libraries, please visit [this website](#).

Community Centres and Gyms

There are a wide variety of community centers across Aotearoa New Zealand offering spaces for various activities and events. These centres provide venues for meetings, social gatherings, classes, and more, often with kitchen facilities and other amenities.

For more Auckland community centres: thecentre.co.nz.

For Wellington community centres: [click here](#)

For Hamilton community centres: [click here](#)

Staying fit and healthy is important. City councils provide low-cost public gyms and swimming pools for anyone with or without a membership to go to.

For Auckland fitness centres: [click here](#)

For Wellington fitness centres: [click here](#)

For Hamilton fitness centres: [click here](#)



Finding housing

You can look for housing online or in your local community. Common websites include:

- www.trademe.co.nz - Aotearoa New Zealand's biggest website for rentals
- www.realestate.co.nz - Another option for finding flats or houses
- Facebook Marketplace or local community groups – Some landlords advertise there



You can also ask friends, community groups, churches, or refugee support organisations if they know of any available flats or rooms.

If you don't speak much English, try asking a trusted person to help you contact landlords or agents.

Understanding the Tenancy Agreement

A tenancy agreement is a legal document. It sets out the rules of renting a house or flat, such as:

- The amount of rent you must pay and how often
- The bond (a payment you give at the start, usually 4 weeks' rent)
- Who is responsible for repairs, power, water, and internet
- Notice periods – the amount of time you or the landlord must give to end the tenancy agreement

Important:

- Always read the tenancy agreement carefully before signing.
- If you do not understand something, ask someone you trust or get help from Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) or Community Law.
- You should receive a copy of the agreement after you sign it.

Language Barriers:

Housing documents and conversations are often in English. If you are not confident in English:

- Ask the landlord if you can take the agreement home and get help translating it
- Use free translation services like iSpeak (offered by many government agencies)
- Bring someone who speaks both English and your language to viewings or meetings

What Is a Bond?

- A bond is money you pay at the beginning of a tenancy (up to 4 weeks' rent) as security.
- The bond money is held by Tenancy Services, not the landlord directly. The landlord must lodge (submit) your bond with Tenancy Services and give you a receipt. You can check if your bond is lodged by contacting Tenancy Services.

- If you damage the property or owe rent when you leave, money can be taken from your bond
- If there are no problems, you get the full bond back when you move out

Do Not Feel Pressured

- Some landlords may try to rush you into signing something quickly. Take your time.
- You have the right to read and understand the agreement
- You do not have to agree to something that feels unfair or confusing
- It's okay to say: "I need time to think" or "I want to get help before I sign"
- If a landlord refuses to give you time, or won't provide a written agreement, this is a warning sign. Get help from Community Law, or CAB.



How to use the household rubbish and recycling bins

Please check your local council website for information on how to use rubbish bins and for collection information.

“

A clean place is a shared responsibility — let's all use the bins and care for our new home together.



Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)



The Citizens Advice Bureau provides free, confidential, and independent information and advice to anyone. It helps individuals understand their rights and how to access the services they need. The Citizens Advice Bureau is an independent community organisation, supported by over 2,000 committed and trained volunteers.

You do not need to book to go to the CAB, you can just turn up. For more information, please [visit their website](#).



Food Banks

Food banks are places that give free food to people who need help. If you do not have enough money for groceries, a food bank can support you and your family. Visit your local church, mosque, or community centre, many give food or know where to go.

Check websites like:

- www.foodbank.co.nz
- www.salvationarmy.org.nz



Bike hubs

Community-led bike hubs have cropped up to support locals to get on bikes and keep on riding!

Bike hubs typically:

- Do basic bike repairs
- Help you learn to repair your bike yourself
- Send you to a trustworthy bike shop if the task is too complex
- Accept donated second-hand bikes
- Need volunteers!

And sometimes:

- Offer free or cheap second-hand bikes in rideable condition
- Offer free or cheap bike parts – or help you source them if they don't have it!
- Offer more involved learning opportunities
- Host fun events!

Driving licenses



In Aotearoa New Zealand, you must have a valid driver licence to drive a car. Driving without a licence, it is illegal and can lead to fines or problems with your asylum claim. If you have a driver's licence from another country, you might be able to use it in Aotearoa New Zealand for up to 12 months.

Aotearoa New Zealand has a three-step system to getting a full licence:

- Learner Licence - You pass a written theory test. You must drive with a supervisor.
- Restricted Licence - You pass a practical driving test. You can drive alone, but with some rules.
- Full Licence - You pass another driving test after a period of safe driving.

For more information, visit www.nzta.govt.nz (New Zealand Transport Agency). If you need support, please ask ASST and we will advise on any resources or programmes available.



Directory for Other Services

Emergency Services

Please call 111 – and ask for police, ambulance or fire (depending on the emergency)



Government & Legal

Immigration NZ – Refugee Status Unit (RSU)

- 📍 162 Victoria St West, Auckland
- 📞 09 928 2236 | 📩 rsu@mbie.govt.nz
- 🕒 Mon–Fri 8:30am–4:00pm
- ✉️ Welfare advisor: welfare.advisor@mbie.govt.nz
- 🌐 immigration.govt.nz/refugees/services

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

- 📞 0800 367 222 (0800 FOR CAB)
- 🌐 cab.org.nz

Community Law Centres

- 🌐 communitylaw.org.nz/our-law-centres/

Inland Revenue (IRD)

- 📞 0800 775 247 (language support available)

Work & Income (WINZ)

- 📞 0800 559 009 (language support available)
- 🌐 workandincome.govt.nz



💰 Food, Money & Housing

MoneyTalks (Budgeting Support)

📞 0800 345 123 | 📧 help@moneytalks.co.nz
🕒 Mon–Fri 8am–8pm; Sat 9am–4pm; Sun 10am–2pm
🌐 moneytalks.co.nz



Auckland City Mission — foodbank & emergency housing

📍 140 Hobson St, Auckland Central
📞 09 303 9266
🌐 aucklandcitymission.org.nz



🏥 Health & Wellbeing

Healthline

🏥 — 24/7 health advice
📞 0800 611 116
PlunketLine — support for pregnant people & new parents
📞 0800 933 922

Auckland Mental Health Crisis Team — urgent support

📞 0800 800 717 (Central Auckland)
📞 09 822 8600 / 8500 (West Auckland)

🛡️ Family & Safety

Shakti — Family Violence Services

⚠️ If in immediate danger, call 111
📞 0800 SHAKTI (0800 742 584) — 24/7 multilingual crisis line
✉️ crisisline@shakti.org.nz
🌐 shakti.org.nz/contact-us



🤝 Community Organisations

Red Cross — Pathways to Employment

✉️ pathways.to.employment@redcross.org.nz



Belong Aotearoa — Safari playgroups for women with toddlers

📞 09 625 2440

UMMA Trust — social services for Muslim women

📍 Ferndale House, 830 New North Rd, Mt Albert, Auckland

📞 09 815 0153 | ✉️ socialworker@ummatrust.co.nz

🌐 ummatrust.co.nz

The Fatimah Foundation — foodbank & wellbeing support

📞 0800 222 432

New Settlers Family & Community Trust (NFACT) — counselling & wellbeing groups

📍 14 Erson Ave, Royal Oak

🌐 nfact.co.nz/contact

📚 Education & Language

English Language Partners — English classes at all levels

🌐 englishlanguage.org.nz/our-centres

Selwyn College REAF — English, literacy, numeracy, civics + free childcare

📍 Kohimarama Rd, Auckland

📞 09 521 9610 ext 698 | ✉️ chittendenm@selwyn.school.nz

AUT Refugee Education

✉️ rka@aut.ac.nz



GLOSSARY of Terms



Refugee and Immigration Terms

Asylum Seeker –

Also known as a refugee claimant. An asylum seeker is someone who has made a claim for refugee status in New Zealand, and is awaiting a decision on their claim. Convention Refugee

A refugee claimant who has since been granted refugee status by Refugee Status Unit or Immigration and Protection Tribunal.

IPT

Immigration and Protection Tribunal – This is the tribunal that decides upon refugee, humanitarian and other appeals.

Interim Visa

An interim visa may be issued by Immigration, if a visa application is still in process, and the previous visa expires. An interim visa is like a bridging visa, that helps you to retain current visa status. This visa has the same conditions as your previous visa.

Quota Refugee

A refugee who has granted status and has been brought to New Zealand under the UNHCR resettlement programme.

RSU

Refugee Status Unit – this is the Unit that refugee claims are submitted to, interviewed under and decided upon.

Temporary Visa

These are visas given to asylum seekers that are given for a short period of time, such as one year. These can include visitor, student and work visas. These visas need to be renewed before the expiry date.

RSU

Refugee Status Unit – this is the Unit that refugee claims are submitted to, interviewed under and decided upon.

Other Government Agencies

MSD

Ministry of Social Development – this is the government body, that Work and Income works under. Sometimes MSD is the term used when accessing welfare support from Work and Income.

IRD

Inland Revenue Department – this is the government organisation that issues tax numbers and manages paying taxes on income in New Zealand.

Other Terms

JP

Justice of the Peace - JPs are volunteer community members who provide free, legally recognised services to the public. They provide services such as certifying documents, witnessing signatures and declarations.

GP

General Practitioner – this is the main doctor most people visit in New Zealand. This is the first place to visit, who can then refer you to a specialist if required. They are also known as a family doctor.

ID

Identification Document – such as your passport, drivers license or student ID.

WINZ

Work and Income New Zealand – this is the government organisation that provides welfare and employment support.

A&E

Accident and Emergency – This is a medical centre you can attend for medical situations such as accidents, injuries or illness. There is a cost to these services, but they are often open later hours, sometimes 24/7.

ESOL

English for Speakers of Other Languages. This is English lessons and classes for people who do not speak English as their first language. This can be done in schools for children, or services such as English Language Partners for adults.



Contact Information



Office Address
875 New North Road Mount
Albert, Auckland 1025



Phone Number
+64 20 409 84607



Email Address
Support@asst.org.nz



Our Website
www.asst.co.org.nz