



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

18 JUN 2020

Bernard Sama

fyi-request-12767-e10848b4@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Bernard Sama

On 2 May 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

The data from 2010 on the total number of students who have been approved and declined Student Allowance under 12(a)(iv) of the Student Allowances Regulations 1998

The Student Allowance is a weekly payment that supports students with their living expenses while studying. The eligibility criteria for the Student Allowance excludes people who have held a residence class visa for less than three years. Section 12(a)(iv) of the Student Allowances Regulations 1998 (the Regulations) provides an exception to this three-year stand-down rule, making resident class visa holders who have been sponsored into New Zealand by a Refugee or Protected Person eligible for the Student Allowance, even if they have held their visa for less than three years.

Students who are applying under section 12(a)(iv) of the Regulations must meet the residency evidence requirements. This includes providing proof that the person sponsoring the applicant was granted refugee or protected person status by Immigration New Zealand, and that the applicant was sponsored into New Zealand by this person.

The exact number of applicants who applied under section 12(a)(iv) of the Regulations cannot be disaggregated from the wider data of those whose residency status is "Refugee or Protected Person" or "residence class visa" due to limitations on standard reporting. The information is held on individual client files, and to obtain this would require significant manual collation. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. 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.

While the Ministry cannot provide the requested information, you may be interested in the approvals and declines for persons whose residency status is "Refugee or Protected Person". This includes, but is not limited to, applicants who have been sponsored into New Zealand by a family member and have therefore, applied for the Student Allowance under section 12(a)(iv) of the Regulations. Please find this data in Appendix A attached.

Page 1 of 3

Please note, the figures for 2019 are subject to change, as the applications are still current and will not be fully resolved until later in 2020.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

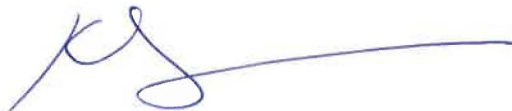
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

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 this response to your request for the total number of students who been approved and decline under Section 12(a)(iv) of the Student Allowances Regulations 1998, 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.

Yours sincerely



SP Simone Pringle
General Manager, Centralised Services

Appendix A:

Table One: The number of Student Allowance applications approved or declined for persons whose residency status is "Refugee or Protected Person", since 2010, broken down by year.

| Year | Approved | Declined | Total |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 2010 | 612 | 109 | 721 |
| 2011 | 653 | 154 | 807 |
| 2012 | 686 | 124 | 810 |
| 2013 | 675 | 146 | 821 |
| 2014 | 718 | 124 | 842 |
| 2015 | 700 | 188 | 888 |
| 2016 | 734 | 180 | 914 |
| 2017 | 725 | 189 | 914 |
| 2018 | 723 | 204 | 927 |
| 2019 | 802 | 200 | 1,002 |

Notes:

- Declined applications are where the application is declined and has never been approved
- Decline reasons are a spread of normal Allowance declines, with the main ones being based on residency status at the study start date
- There are a small number of applications that that are still unresolved and have not been included in these figures for privacy reasons
- The data for 2019 is still active and will not be fully resolved until later in 2020.