



19 APR 2018



Dear 

On 22 February 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *For the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years.*
 - *How many people applied for the assistance to transition into employment grant?*
 - *How many applicants were successful?*
 - *How much in total was paid to applicants?*
 - *How do applicants provide 'evidence of costs'?*
 - *Are recipients required to show evidence they have used this grant on their stated needs?*
 - *How many successful applicants were:*
 - o *receiving a main benefit;*
 - o *enrolled with Work and Income as a job seeker; and*
 - o *registered with Student Job Search?*

Work and Income's Transition to Work (TTW) programme supports people to move into employment by providing non-recoverable financial assistance for essential costs relating to seeking work, attending job interviews, moving into work, and transitioning from one job to another.

There are three categories of TTW Grants available. A total maximum of \$1,500 in TTW Grants is available in any 52-week period. This can be broken down to maximum amounts payable depending on the type of employment transition costs that the client is facing.

Job search costs, which help cover the costs involved with seeking work and attending job interviews. This is available at a maximum rate of \$300 per person in any 52-week period. Job search costs might include clothing costs, child care costs, the costs of an interpreter and transport costs.

Job placement costs, which help cover the costs that an applicant will need to incur to enter into employment. This is available at a maximum rate of up to \$1500 in any 52-week period (less any other Transition to Work Grants made in the same period). Job placement costs might include necessary job-related clothing or equipment, child care and transport costs, and relocation costs, if the applicant needs to relocate his or her place of residence to take up employment.

Bridging finance, which helps to cover the cost of essential living expenses for an eligible applicant who requires assistance in the period between the last payment of their working age benefit, wages or salary, and the applicant's first payment of wages or salary from their new employment.

When applying for a TTW Grant, clients are required to provide the following as applicable:

- identification
- verification of their income (if not receiving on-going financial assistance)
- verification of their assets (if not receiving on-going financial assistance)
- proof of job search costs (where possible)
- quotes for job placement costs
- verification of the job or job interview

When a client is applying for assistance with either job search or job placement costs a client is required to provide a quote. For example, if a client needs assistance with clothing for a new job, a quote can be obtained from a store for the items.

When a TTW Grant is approved and loaded onto a client's payment card, they are also provided with a Supplier Payment Authorisation form. The Supplier Payment Authorisation form is to be given to the supplier when making the purchase and details the need that the client specifically applied for. This ensures that the client receives the items that the TTW Grant is intended for. The Ministry does not require clients to provide evidence of what items have been purchased with the TTW Grant.

Additional information regarding TTW Grants is available on the Work and Income website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/assistance-to-transition-into-employment-01.html

The following table shows the number of Transition to Work Grant applications processed, granted and the total amount granted, broken down by grant type for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years.

| Transition to Work Grant type | 2015/2016 | | | 2016/2017 | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------|-----------------|------------------------|---------|-----------------|
| | Applications processed | Granted | Amount granted | Applications processed | Granted | Amount granted |
| Bridging Finance | 10,875 | 10,578 | \$3,370,777.76 | 11,034 | 10,770 | \$3,439,876.97 |
| Job Placement Costs | 51,429 | 50,460 | \$10,714,626.72 | 51,195 | 50,423 | \$11,084,834.89 |
| Job Search Costs | 19,686 | 19,365 | \$1,829,698.64 | 20,841 | 20,603 | \$1,961,661.87 |

Notes:

- this is a count of TTW Grants processed not clients
- applications processed include applications granted and declined
- clients can receive multiple payments.

I am unable to provide you with the number of TTW Grant recipients who registered as a Work and Income job seeker or registered with Student Job Search as this information is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information 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.

In order to qualify for a TTW Grant a client must:

- be in receipt of a main benefit or
- be a student enrolled with Work and Income as a job seeker or registered with Student Job Search or
- not be in receipt of a main benefit but moving into work or facing a short gap between jobs of less than four weeks.

The following table shows the number of successful TTW Grant applications where a client was in receipt of a main benefit at the time of grant. Depending on a client's situation, there may be a delay between a client's main benefit ceasing and the client applying for a TTW Grant. For example, a client may need a TTW Grant to help buy essential job related equipment once they have started employment and their main benefit had been cancelled. As such, this table also shows the number of successful TTW Grants where the client was not in receipt of a main benefit at the time of grant but who had received a main benefit in the 28 days prior to the application being granted, and the number of successful TTW Grants where the client did not receive a main benefit in the 28 days prior to an application being granted, for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years.

| 2015/2016 | | | 2016/2017 | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Main benefit at the time of grant | Main benefit in the 28 days prior to the time of grant | No main benefit in the 28 days prior | Main benefit at the time of grant | Main benefit in the 28 days prior to the time of grant | No main benefit in the 28 days prior |
| 60,248 | 10,916 | 9,239 | 61,679 | 11,015 | 9,102 |

Notes:

- main Benefits exclude NZ Superannuation, Veteran's Pension, Non-Beneficiary assistance, Orphan's Benefit and Unsupported Child's Benefit
- this is a count of TTW applications granted not clients
- clients can receive multiple payments.

To enable you to interpret these statistics, you might be interested to know that as at 30 June 2017, the New Zealand unemployment rate has reduced to 4.8 per cent from 5.1 per cent as at 30 June 2016. Additional information regarding the unemployment rate is available on Statistic New Zealand's website: www.stats.govt.nz/

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 shortly. 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 concerning TTW Grants, 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



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