



18 JAN 2021

On 26 November 2020, you emailed the Office of Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development and Employment, requesting the following information under the Official Information Act (the Act) 1982:

- *How many migrants are receiving benefits?*
- *What are their nationalities?*
- *What is preventing their deportation?*

On 27 November 2020, your request was transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry).

On 8 December 2020, the Ministry contacted you to clarify your request, as the Ministry was unsure if you were requesting generic information about migrants receiving all benefits or if you were wanting information that related to temporary visa holders receiving the Emergency Benefit. You responded to the Ministry on the same day confirming that you would like information about temporary visa holders receiving the Emergency Benefit due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Emergency Benefit for temporary visa holders assists people that hold a temporary visa and cannot return to their home country due to the COVID-19 pandemic and who may need support if they are in hardship. The Emergency Benefit is short-term assistance, available from 1 December 2020 to 28 February 2021, with the last payments being made up until 28 February 2021. You can find more information about eligibility criteria for the Emergency Benefit at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19/temporary-visa-holders.html#null](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19/temporary-visa-holders.html#null).

For the sake of clarity your questions are addressed in turn.

*1. How many migrants are receiving benefits?*

Please see the below table which shows the number of applications granted for the Emergency Benefit for temporary visa holders between 1 to 15 December 2020.

	<b>Total number of applications granted</b>
<b>Emergency Benefit for temporary visa holders</b>	64

2. *What are their nationalities?*

Please see the below table which shows the nationalities of temporary visa holders who have applied and been granted the Emergency Benefit. You may note that some numbers have been suppressed and are represented by 'S', in order to protect client privacy. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in the information.

<b>Country of birth</b>	<b>Applications granted</b>
Argentina	S
Bangladesh	0
Brazil	0
Canada	S
Chile	S
China - People's Republic of	S
Colombia	S
Denmark	0
England	0
Fiji	0
Germany	S
India	9
Iran	S
Jordan	0
Korea - Republic of South	S
Kuwait	S
Malawi	0
Malaysia	S
Mexico	S
Mongolia	S
Nepal	0
Pakistan	S
Papua New Guinea	S
Philippines	S
Samoa	7
South Africa	S
Spain	S
Sri Lanka	S
Tonga	9
Tuvalu	S
United Kingdom	S
United States of America	S
Vietnam	S
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>

### 3. What is preventing their deportation?

The Emergency Benefit for temporary visa holders is available to people who are either:

- arranging to return home as soon as they can, or they have a way to support themselves within a short time (e.g. entering employment shortly)
- are unable to get home because of COVID-19 travel restrictions but will do so as soon as flights are available
- cannot yet travel home for another good reason (e.g. severe illness or injury preventing them from being able to fly) but will do as soon as they can.

The payment is not available to people who are liable for deportation. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) as this information is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response relating to the Emergency Benefit for temporary visa holders, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Bridget Saunders  
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