



20 JAN 2021

On 3 December 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How many people took up the Relocation from Auckland Assistance initiative payment in total?*
- *A breakdown of how many people received the grant in the \$1,000 range and how many in the \$5,000 range.*
- *How much in total was paid to people opting to move?*
- *What locations did the people move to?*
- *Are there any social housing providers, charities, iwi groups etc that assisted people who did move when they arrived in their new location? Any agencies that may have been involved in assisting people relocate?*

The Relocation from Auckland Assistance (RFAA) was a one-off payment of up to \$5,000 for people who chose to relocate from Auckland. Established in June 2016, it aimed to provide practical assistance to enable people to expand their employment and housing options outside of Auckland and alleviate the increasing pressure on the Auckland housing market. This was a voluntary scheme available to people living in Auckland who were either a current tenant of or eligible for Public Housing.

On 18 December 2017, the former Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Hon Phil Twyford, announced that the RFAA would be stopped from 15 January 2018, after increases in public housing needs in other towns and cities showed that the scheme was moving housing pressure to other parts of the country.

For the sake of clarity, I will address each of your questions in turn:

- *How many people took up the Relocation from Auckland Assistance initiative payment in total*

The Ministry can advise that a total of 608 clients took up the RFAA grant.

- *A breakdown of how many people received the grant in the \$1,000 range and how many in the \$5,000 range.*

The Ministry can advise that there were three grants within the \$1,000 - \$1,999.99 range, and 72 grants within the \$5,000 - \$5,999.99 range. The average spend per RFAA grant was \$4,058.44

- *How much in total was paid to people opting to move?*

The Ministry can advise that a total of \$2,467,529.47 was paid to people who took up the RFAA grant.

- *What locations did the people move to?*

The RFAA initiative finished on 15 January 2018, and the data that the Ministry collected in relation to this assistance was obtained from a number of different sources and compiled in a manual spreadsheet. In order to provide you with a response to cover the timeframe for the entire initiative, the Ministry would need to check the spreadsheet against the file of each recipient of the RFAA. This would divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, the above part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as answering in full would require substantial collation. 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 accommodate your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

In an effort to assist, however, the Ministry is able to provide you with the table below, which shows the number of households that were granted a RFAA grant between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2017, broken down by the Work and Income region they relocated to. This information was collated during the time of the initiative (i.e., when the relevant data was more accessible) and has already been made publicly available as part of a previous Official Information Act 1982 request.

**Table 1: The number of households granted RFAA in 2017, broken down by the Work and Income region to which they relocated**

<b>Work and Income Region</b>	<b>Number of households</b>
Bay of Plenty	37
Canterbury	28
Central	20
East Coast	24
Nelson	S
Northland	82
Southern	S
Taranaki	32
Waikato	100
Wellington	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>365</b>

**Note:**

- In order to protect client privacy, some low values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. 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.

- *Are there any social housing providers, charities, iwi groups etc that assisted people who did move when they arrived in their new location? Any agencies that may have been involved in assisting people relocate?*

The Ministry is unable to provide you with information relating to any social housing providers, charities, iwi groups or other external agencies that provided assistance to those who relocated. We can advise that some clients who received RFAA did relocate to social housing. However, the Ministry did not have any contracts with partner agencies to support people specifically moving to regions outside of Auckland, and any referral information to an external agency would be held on individual case files. Therefore, in order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review hundreds of files. As such, I refuse your request 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.

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
- 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 regarding the Relocation from Auckland Assistance initiative, 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



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