



16 MAR 2021

On 16 February 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Data on the number of Special Need Grants for Food in Porirua and nationally for the four quarters of 2019 and four quarters of 2020.*

The Ministry provides hardship assistance to help people pay for essential items or services they need urgently. Hardship assistance includes Special Needs Grants (SNGs) which is an additional income support that aims to address the immediate needs of families and individuals who are in hardship. Ministry clients are given a one-off payment to help with an essential or emergency cost, including food.

A person does not have to be getting a benefit to qualify for an SNG, but they must meet an income and asset test. More information about SNGs for food is available on the Ministry's website at: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/urgent-costs/food.html.

A request for hardship assistance for food can be approved if a client meets the eligibility qualifications and will depend on the client's individual circumstance. As such, decisions to approve SNG's can be discretionary (and are considered on a case by case basis).

To qualify for a SNG for food, the applicant must:

- meet an income and cash asset test
- have an emergency or essential need
- not be able to meet the need from their own resources or through other sources
- have met any hardship obligations that have been applied to them
- be a New Zealand citizen or Permanent resident, and
- generally, be ordinarily resident in New Zealand.

In regard to your request, please find enclosed in your response, **Appendix A** which contains two tables, showing the number of SNGs for food granted.

Table One: The number of SNG food grants and the amount granted in the Porirua City Territorial Local Authority in the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2020, broken down by quarter end.

Table Two: The number of SNG food grants and the amount granted nationally during the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2020, broken down by quarter end.

You will note a sharp increase in the amount of SNGs for food in the quarter ending 30 June 2020. The year 2020, has seen a significant increase in demand for SNG's as the Ministry supported people through the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 in regard to the SNG that have been granted nationwide and in the Porirua City, 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.

Ngā mihi nui



Bridget Saunders
Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery

Appendix A

Table One: The number of SNG food grants and the amount granted in the Porirua City Territorial Local Authority in the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2020, broken down by quarter end.

Quarter ending	March 2019	June 2019	September 2019	December 2019	March 2020	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020	Total
Amount Granted	\$329,558.32	\$341,425.38	\$371,897.00	\$457,862.28	\$443,081.74	\$1,065,159.17	\$485,977.06	\$511,596.27	\$4,006,557.22
Number of Grants	3,132	3,360	3,708	4,572	4,539	8,874	4,590	5,046	37,827

Table Two: The number of SNG food grants and the amount granted nationally during the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2020, broken down by quarter end.

Quarter ending	March 2019	June 2019	September 2019	December 2019	March 2020	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020	Total
Amount Granted	\$21,728,864.37	\$22,563,277.89	\$26,561,086.73	\$30,344,353.75	\$29,358,223.57	\$64,189,930.22	\$31,400,866.68	\$35,182,201.21	\$261,328,804.42
Number of Grants	212,871	229,131	273,282	307,293	311,028	566,646	317,523	359,001	2,576,775

Notes for table one and two:

- Territorial Local Authority (TLA) is based on the clients address as at the end of each period.
- TLA is defined under the Local Government Act 2002 as a city council or district council.
- This is a count of grants not a count of clients, a client can have multiple grants in a period.
- The amount granted is not the amount spent.
- The data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table. The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than 2 counts.