



[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

On 8 July 2019, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The number of Special Needs Grants for food, allocated over the last 5-years for the Wairarapa region. This includes Carterton, Masterton, and South Wairarapa District Councils.*

Work and Income, a service line of 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 provide non-taxable, one-off recoverable or non-recoverable financial assistance to people to meet immediate needs, such as a food grant. In most cases SNGs for food do not have to be paid back.

Over this time, the Ministry has worked to improve the accessibility of assistance, including SNGs for food being granted by our Contact Centre or through our online service, MyMSD. People no longer need to wait at a service centre for this emergency assistance.

More information about food grants is available on Work and Income's website at: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/urgent-costs/food.html.

Please find enclosed a table with the number of SNGs for food and the amount granted for the Wairarapa region during the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2019 broken down by financial year.

Further information regarding benefits and hardship payments is available on the Ministry's website. The Benefit Fact Sheets provide a high-level view of trends in hardship information over the past five years. The Fact Sheets present numbers and characteristics of clients who have received hardship assistance at the end of the current quarter and for the equivalent quarter one year ago and five years ago. You will note Work and Income divides New Zealand into 11 regions. The Benefit Fact Sheets are available at: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/.

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 and any attached documents 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 regarding food grants with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding food 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Wise', is written over a horizontal line.

Cassandra Wise
Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery

Table One: The number of food grants and the amount granted for the Wairarapa region during the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2019 broken down by financial year

Region	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
	Number of grants	Amount granted	Number of grants	Amount granted	Number of grants	Amount granted	Number of grants	Amount granted	Number of grants	Amount granted
Wairarapa	3,532	\$389,336	3,676	\$410,094	4,018	\$447,441	3,704	\$413,426	3,697	\$411,755

Notes:

- This is a count of grants not a count of clients.
- A client may have multiple grants in a period and counted more than once.
- The Service Centre is based on the Work and Income site where the recommending case manager for the application was based at the time of the grant.