



13 June 2023

Tēnā koe

On 15 May 2023, the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa transferred part of your request for information to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry). The following parts of your request that were transferred to the Ministry are being considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Date of implementation of \$350 "Steps-to-Freedom" grant

Inflation adjusted value of "Steps-to-Freedom" grant in today's money.

Steps to Freedom is a non-recoverable re-establishment grant that is part of the Special Needs Grant welfare programme. Like the other re-establishment grants, entitlement is based on an applicant's identified needs to re-establish themselves in a community.

The first Steps to Freedom Grant was introduced in 1983, with a maximum grant of \$116.92. In 1990, the maximum was increased to \$369.14 and restructured again in 1991 and set at \$350 (where it has remained).

The Steps to Freedom grant is not indexed to inflation or to average wage growth like main benefits, therefore this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this document does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

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'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 about the Steps to Freedom Grant, 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

Bridget Saunders
**Manager Issue Resolution
Service Delivery**