



24 May 2023

Tēnā koe

On 27 April 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The number of current open (not yet approved, nor declined) 5k to work applications as at 1 April 2023, as at 1 April 2022, 2021, 2020 and 2019*
- *The ratio of "closed" 5k to work applications which are accepted to those which are declined in the year to 1 April 2023, on the year to 1 April, 2022, 2021, 2020, and 2019.*
- *The median time from the submission of applications, to the client being alerted of whether their application is approved or declined.*
- *Any internal communications regarding the reasoning behind the significant delays in responding to these applications.*

The \$5k to Work grant is an incentive payment to assist clients to relocate when they have secured sustainable employment. The job offer must be far enough from the client's current residence that commuting to work would be financially impractical and that without relocating the job seeker would be financially disadvantaged by taking up the employment. It is expected that people who receive the \$5k to Work payment would have their accommodation arranged prior to relocation.

The recipient does not have to be receiving a main benefit from Work and Income but does need to meet the eligibility criteria for a main benefit, for example Jobseeker Support.

When it is identified that a Work and Income client would benefit from assistance to relocate, staff will proactively advise clients that they may be entitled to the \$5k to Work payment. More information about this payment can be found on the Work and Income website here:

[www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/5k-to-work.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/5k-to-work.html).

Your requests for the number of current open (not yet approved, nor declined) \$5k to Work applications and the median time from the submission of applications to the clients being alerted of a decision on their application are refused under section 18(f) of the Act. This information is held on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. 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 charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

Please find attached **Appendix One** regarding the number of approved and declined \$5k to Work grants for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2023.

Your request for internal communications regarding the reasoning behind the significant delays in responding to \$5k to Work applications is refused under section 18(e) of the Act. These communications do 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 and any attached documents 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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding \$5k to Work 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

*Bridget Saunders*

Bridget Saunders  
**Manager Issue Resolution  
Service Delivery**

**Appendix One:** The number of \$5k to Work grants approved and declined for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2023

| <b>Year Ending</b> | <b>Total Grants</b> | <b>Total Declines</b> |
|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| March 2019         | 942                 | 189                   |
| March 2020         | 990                 | 168                   |
| March 2021         | 2,403               | 375                   |
| March 2022         | 4,449               | 717                   |
| March 2023         | 4,224               | 1,131                 |

Notes:

- \$5k to Work is an 'incentive payment' to assist clients who have secured sustainable employment to relocate.
- The \$5k to Work incentive payment is a non-taxable payment of \$5,000 and is not asset or income tested.
- The \$5K to Work grant came into effect from 1 October 2020.
- Prior to 1 October 2020 the incentive payment increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000.
- Grants are not the same as the number of clients. A client may have received more than one grants where operational errors have occurred.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.