



26 October 2023

Tēnā koe

On 4 October 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *I would like to request the following information about one-off hardship payments made by Work and Income to beneficiaries:*
- *Please provide this information on both Special Needs Grants (not including food grants) and Advance Payments of Benefit in the past three financial years:*
 1. *The number of individual one-off payments made in each year.*
 2. *The total amount of one-off payments made in each year.*
 3. *For both the number of payments and the total amount, a breakdown into recoverable and non-recoverable payments. (Non-recoverable payments will be Special Needs Grants. Recoverable payments include some Special Needs Grants and all Advances.)*

Special Needs Grants provide non-taxable, one-off recoverable or non-recoverable financial assistance to clients to meet immediate needs. Further information can be found on the Work and Income website: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/special-needs-grant.html>

An Advance Payment of Benefit is a one-off payment to clients to help pay for an essential or emergency cost. Further information can be found on the Work and Income website: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/advance-payment-of-benefit.html>

Please see **Table One** below which shows the amount granted for Special Needs Grants, and Advance Payments of Benefit for the last three financial years, and **Table Two** which shows the number of grants for Special Needs Grants, and Advance Payments of Benefit for the last three financial years. The tables show both 'recoverable' and 'non-recoverable' as requested.

Note that the information you have requested in questions one and two is publicly available in the Benefit Face Sheets on the Ministry's website. You can view them here:

<https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/#:~:text=The%20Benefit%20Fact%20Sheets%20provide,benefit%20sub%2Dcategories>

Table One: The total amount of Special Needs Grant (SNG) (excluding food) and Advance Payment of Benefit (ADV) payments for the financial years 2021 to 2023.

Recoverable by Grant type		FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Not Recoverable	SNG	\$355,523,757	\$422,150,194	\$404,499,977
	ADV	\$349,965	\$358,519	\$200,084
	Total	\$355,873,722	\$422,508,713	\$404,700,062
Recoverable	SNG	\$21,189,240	\$12,835,036	\$46,700,368
	ADV	\$323,835,140	\$299,138,303	\$335,061,880
	Total	\$345,024,380	\$311,973,339	\$381,762,248
Total Grants		\$700,898,101	\$734,482,051	\$786,462,309

Table 2: Total grants for Special Needs Grants (SNGs) (excluding food) and Advance Payment of Benefit (ADV) payments for the financial years 2021 to 2023.

Recoverable by Grant type		FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Not Recoverable	SNG	249,951	231,558	226,458
	ADV	1,236	1,254	687
	Total	251,187	232,812	227,145
Recoverable	SNG	45,897	39,498	84,735
	ADV	805,425	693,885	759,255
	Total	851,322	733,383	843,987
Total Grants		1,102,506	966,195	1,071,132

Notes for Table One and Table Two:

- The amount granted may not be the amount spent.
- The number of grants is not a count of clients, clients may have multiple grants in a period.
- 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.

- Random rounding does not round down to zero, a value of one or two will be rounded to three.
- 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 two counts.

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.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Special Needs Grants and Advance Payment of Benefit for the financial years 2021 to 2023, 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**