



4 December 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 14 October 2025, requesting information about beneficiaries moving to other regions for work.

On 12 November 2025 we notified you that our response to you would be late, and that information on the regions that people moved to or from would be withheld under section 18(f) of the Act. Since then, the scope of your request was reviewed, and I note that earlier interactions with our Media team identified the limitations of that information, noting it would likely be on individual case files, and your request was refined. Therefore, we did not need to state in our response that this information was being withheld.

Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

The Ministry continues to help people transition into work, with support provided on a case-by-case basis – from pre-employment preparation and financial assistance such as the Transition to Work Grant, to pastoral and wraparound services that help clients settle and stay in employment.

If people need to move elsewhere in the country to secure a new job, we may be able to help them do that. The products and supports available for this have evolved over time.

The Ministry's new Relocate for Work Support (RfWS) payment was introduced on 31 March 2025. RfWS was established under section 101 of the Social Security Act 2018 as a new welfare programme and replaced the previous \$5k to Work payment. The payment is more targeted, to ensure it reaches those that need it most. People must be getting a main benefit and be likely to continue getting a main benefit for a long time to be eligible for RfWS. People did not need to be on a main benefit to receive the previous \$5k to Work payment.

The RfWS payment helps cover travel and specific moving costs and is intended to support clients who face barriers to relocating for employment when suitable and sustainable job opportunities aren't available locally. For more information, please see the following link:

<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/relocate-for-work-support/index.html>

The previous \$5k to Work payment was first introduced in 2014 as \$3k to Christchurch to assist people relocating for employment opportunities following the Canterbury earthquakes. It was later extended nationwide in 2016 as \$3k to Work, and in 2020 increased to \$5k to Work. \$5k to Work was operationally and legislatively strengthened throughout 2023 and 2024. One of these updates included clarifying the eligibility criteria to more clearly state clients must be at risk of long-term benefit receipt to qualify for the payment.

Please see **Appendix One** for information on the number of grants, and distinct clients for \$5K to work and Relocate for Work Support from 1 January 2020 to 30 September 2025. Note that the calendar year data for 2025 covers up to the end of September 2025 only.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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

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Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services

Appendix One

Table One: Number of distinct clients and grants for the \$5k to Work and Relocate for Work Support from 1 January 2020 to 30 September 2025, by calendar year.

Calendar Year	5K to Work		Relocate for Work Support	
	Number of Grants	Distinct Clients	Number of Grants	Distinct Clients
2020	1,491	1,488	0	0
2021	4,074	4,065	0	0
2022	4,545	4,533	0	0
2023	3,237	3,234	0	0
2024	1,611	1,611	0	0
2025	453	453	390	381

Notes

1. From 1 October 2020, the \$3k to Work changed to \$5k to Work. This incentive payment has increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000.
2. \$5K to Work was phased out in April 2025 and replaced by Relocate for Work Support.
3. Number of grants are not the same as the number of distinct clients. A client may have been granted more than one \$5k to Work grant where operational errors may have occurred.
4. Calendar year 2025 covers up to end of September 2025 only.