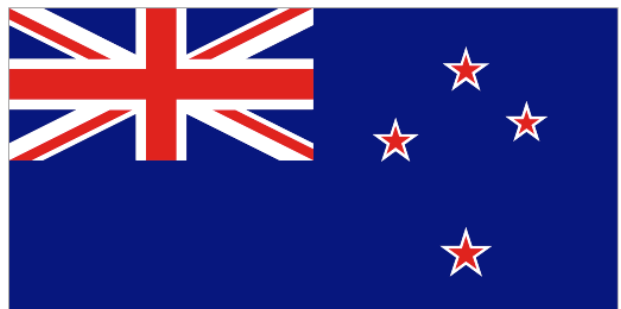


COUNTRY
CHAPTER

NZL

NEW ZEALAND

BY THE GOVERNMENT OF NEW ZEALAND



New Zealand Overview

Resettlement programme since: 1987	Selection Missions: Yes	Dossier Submissions: Yes
--	-----------------------------------	------------------------------------

Resettlement Admission Targets for 2013-2014: program year runs from 1 July -30 June

Admission targets for UNHCR submissions: NB, up to 300 places within New Zealand's Refugee Quota Programme are allocated for Family Reunification, both UNHCR-referred and non-UNHCR referred.	750
Total Resettlement Admission Target:	750

Regional Allocations for 2013-2014:

Africa	108 (14%)
Asia and Pacific:	375 (50%)
Middle East and North Africa	107 (14%)
Europe:	-
Americas:	160 (21%)

Sub-quota features:

Designated sub-quota/acceptance for:	2013 Description, additional comments:
Emergency resettlement procedures	Up to 35 places
Medical cases	Up to 75 places (including up to 20 places for HIV/AIDS referrals)
Women-at-risk cases	At least 75 places
Unaccompanied children	-
Family Reunion (within programme)	Up to 300 places (including declared spouse and dependent children of previous quota refugees and UNHCR referred family-linked cases)

1. Resettlement Policy

1.1 Description of New Zealand's resettlement policy

New Zealand has been accepting refugees for resettlement since the end of the Second World War. In 1987, the Government established a formal annual quota for the resettlement of refugees.

Over time, New Zealand's refugee policy has evolved in response to changing global circumstances and needs. This has resulted in the resettlement of a diverse range of nationalities.

New Zealand's refugee policy reflects the Government's commitment to fulfilling its international humanitarian obligations and responsibilities. Through refugee policy, New Zealand contributes to the global community's efforts to assist refugees in need of resettlement. The **Refugee Quota Branch (RQB)** is the branch of **Immigration New Zealand (INZ)**, which is tasked with operating the Refugee Quota Programme. INZ in turn, sits within the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

1.2 Ministries responsible for resettlement policy

New Zealand's annual resettlement quota is 750 places with a focus on the needs and priorities identified by the UNHCR. The Government aims to ensure that the quota remains targeted to refugees in greatest need of resettlement, while also balancing this with New Zealand's capacity to provide good settlement outcomes to those accepted under the programme. The size, regional allocation and priorities for New Zealand's Refugee Quota Programme is set by the New Zealand Government in three-year cycles. The composition of the refugee quota is agreed to annually by the Minister of Immigration and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

1.3 Process for deciding the three year and annual refugee quota

- The UNHCR forwards a submission based on the UNHCR's indications of the Global Resettlement Needs and Priorities to the New Zealand Government to assist in the development of New Zealand's Refugee Quota Programme.
- The Government invites stakeholders in the refugee sector in New Zealand (refugee communities, government departments, non-government organisations (NGO), individuals, local government) to contribute written submissions specifying the support they can provide refugee groups to successfully settle in New Zealand. Stakeholder submissions refer to refugee groups/populations rather than individual cases.
- Following receipt of the submissions outlined above, a paper is drafted for Cabinet agreement to the three year quota programme. In addition, the Ministers of Immigration and Foreign Affairs agree annually to the quota programme composition which is developed following submissions from the UNHCR and other key stakeholders.
- A summary of the agreed quota composition and selection mission plan for the quota is released to stakeholders in the resettlement sector.

2. Criteria for Recognition of Refugee Status Eligibility: Asylum and Resettlement

2.1 National legislation defining refugee and protection status eligibility

New Zealand is a party to both the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (Refugee Conventions). New Zealand also has protection obligations under the 1984 Convention Against Torture (Cat) and 1966 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The Immigration Act 2009 provides the statutory basis by which New Zealand determines who it has obligations to under the Refugee Conventions, CAT and ICCPR.

Persons in New Zealand who seek asylum as refugees are assessed in accordance with the criteria for refugee status set out in article 1A (2) of the 1951 Refugee Convention. Applicants who are rejected have the right of appeal to the independent Immigration and Protection Tribunal (IPT), which sits within the Ministry of Justice.

2.2 Refugee status criteria: asylum-seekers and resettled refugees

Domestic asylum-seekers are considered quite separately from, and in addition to, the mandated refugees accepted for resettlement to New Zealand under the Refugee Quota Programme. New Zealand does not conduct Refugee Status Determination for UNHCR mandated cases being considered under the Refugee Quota Programme.

3. Criteria for Resettlement

3.1 Refugee resettlement eligibility criteria

Refugees considered for resettlement under New Zealand's annual Refugee Quota Programme (except certain applicants who are nuclear or dependent family members of the principle applicant) must be recognised as mandated refugees and referred by UNHCR according to prescribed resettlement guidelines. All submissions for resettlement to New Zealand are referred by UNHCR to the RQB for consideration.

In brief, individual refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement to New Zealand must:

- Be recognised as a refugee according to the Refugee Conventions;
- Be submitted for resettlement by UNHCR in accordance with UNHCR resettlement guidelines and priorities;
- Fall within the regional and global priorities of UNHCR;
- Fall within the regional and global priorities of the Government of New Zealand as set out in the agreed three year Refugee Quota Programme;
- Be assessed as admissible under INZ policy and procedures; and, be otherwise admissible under New Zealand law.

3.2 Admissibility Criteria

The principle consideration in determining admissibility for resettlement to New Zealand has been set out in the above section. Reasons an individual may be inadmissible for resettlement to New Zealand include past criminal activity (i.e. individuals who have committed crimes of moral turpitude, drug trafficking or acts involving persecution or torture) or identity or security grounds (i.e. individuals who have been involved in, or have a close association with a group which has been involved in, terrorist activity, crimes against humanity or who would present a serious security threat to New Zealand society).

When processing and deciding cases under the Refugee Quota Programme, the following factors are considered:

- INZ policy
- Credibility
- Settlement
- Risk, and
- Medical

Credibility – Issues considered include sufficient, plausibility and consistency of information provided.

Settlement – Issues considered include that individuals approved under the Refugee Quota Programme do not present settlement issues which may prove to be unmanageable or an unreasonable drain upon resources.

Risk – Issues considered include whether the potential resettlement of a particular individual or family does not pose a security, health, or character, or international reputation risk to New Zealand. Risks are assessed for each individual over the age of 17 years.

Medical – From 1 July 2013, new health selection criteria have been introduced for refugees under consideration for inclusion under the New Zealand refugee quota programme. The new criteria mean that anyone assessed as having certain conditions or treatment needs will not be selected for the quota programme unless they are granted an exception on a case-by-case basis by the Minister of Immigration.

The conditions and treatment needs are that the person:

- requires dialysis treatment
- has severe haemophilia
- has a physical, intellectual, cognitive and/or sensory incapacity that requires full-time care, including care in the community
- currently has any form of tuberculosis (TB) and has not completed full treatment, or
- has a history of diagnostic findings or treatment for multiple drug resistant or extensively drug resistant TB, unless cleared by a New Zealand Respiratory or Infectious Diseases specialist.

Refugees provisionally accepted under the Refugee Quota Programme are required to complete health screening offshore for TB and HIV/AIDS. Those found to be TB positive are not declined for resettlement, but their travel is temporarily delayed while they receive treatment to ensure they are fit to travel.¹

3.3 Other humanitarian immigration programmes

In recognition of the fact that it is often difficult for family members of refugees to meet the eligibility requirements of normal immigration policy, the **Refugee Family Support Category (RFSC)** is a specific policy that allows extended family members of refugees in New Zealand to apply for Permanent Residence. The RFSC is limited to 300 places per year. These places are in addition to the 750 places available under the Refugee Quota Programme.

The RFSC aims to support successful resettlement of refugees resident in New Zealand, by providing them with the opportunity to sponsor family members who do not qualify for residence under any other INZ immigration category. The RFSC has a two tier registration system. Priority is given to tier one sponsors. (See section 14 (8) below for further details.)

4. Resettlement Allocations/Processing Priorities

4.1 Resettlement allocations including sub-quotas

The annual Refugee Quota of 750 places is comprised of the following subcategories:

- Women-at-Risk – a minimum of 75 places
- Medical/Disabled – up to 75 places (including up to 20 places for refugees with HIV/AIDS)
- UNHCR Priority Protection – 450 places (including up to 300 places for family reunification and 35 places for emergency cases)

All subcategories within the Refugee Quota Programme generally include the nuclear and dependent family members (i.e. spouse and dependent children) of the principle applicant, except the 20 places reserved for those with HIV/AIDS – nuclear family members for such refugees would be counted in the category identified in the UNHCR Resettlement Registration Form (RRF).

Women-at-Risk Subcategory

The Women-at-Risk subcategory covers refugee women who are without the support of their traditional family protectors or community and are at risk in their country of refuge. These women would usually be outside the normal criteria for acceptance by resettlement countries and are in need of protection from gender-related persecution such as abduction, sexual abuse and exploitation. This subcategory generally includes the nuclear and dependent family members of the principal applicant.

¹ Usually approximately eight weeks.

Medical/Disabled Subcategory

The Medical/Disabled subcategory provides for the resettlement of refugees with medical, physical or social disabilities which place them outside the normal criteria for acceptance by resettlement countries. Generally, applicants under this category must have a medical condition that cannot be treated in their country of refuge, and resettlement to New Zealand would be life-saving or significantly enhance their medical condition and well-being. In all cases where there is an apparent physical or psychological condition, full medical reports must be provided by UNHCR for assessment by the relevant health authorities in New Zealand. The full disclosure of the condition and its effects are essential for planning purposes. This subcategory generally includes the nuclear and dependent family members of the principle applicant.

The up to 20 places for refugees with HIV/AIDS within the Medical/Disabled subcategory ensures health authorities in New Zealand have time to plan appropriate and necessary treatment and support for those refugees arriving in New Zealand with HIV/AIDS. Those refugees with HIV/AIDS are not excluded, as New Zealand's quota programme is aimed to focus on providing protection to those most in need.

UNHCR Priority Protection Subcategory

UNHCR Priority Protection subcategory applies to refugees requiring urgent legal or physical protection (i.e. refugees who face an immediate life-threatening situation, imminent refoulement, deportation or local security threat including arbitrary arrest, detention or imprisonment, which may result in a violation of their human rights). It may also include refugees for whom the international community has identified a need for resettlement as part of a comprehensive strategy to address a refugee problem. This subcategory, as with all other subcategories within the Refugee Quota Programme, generally includes the nuclear and dependent family members of the principal applicant.

In 2013, the New Zealand Government agreed to include in the quota the allocation annually of up to 50 places to UNHCR referred refugees who require resettlement from large-scale refugee crisis situations.

Emergency Resettlement

Emergency resettlement submissions from UNHCR are considered under the Priority Protection subcategory. Emergency resettlement cases are given priority over all other refugee resettlement cases. Where possible, the RQB aims to issue its decision and undertake resettlement as soon as possible upon receipt of all the necessary documentation from UNHCR.

The Government of New Zealand offers a limited number of places for emergency resettlement each year. A notional figure of around 35 places is used (including the immediate family of the principal applicant). Emergency resettlement cases are drawn from countries worldwide and not limited to areas where global or regional priorities have been allocated.

4.2 Processing priorities

Aside from Emergency cases, all cases considered for processing must be in line with the priorities set out in the agreed Refugee Quota Programme.

4.3 Non-UNHCR allocations

Spouses and dependent children of quota refugees may be included under the Refugee Quota Programme without a referral from UNHCR, as long as they were declared during the refugee's initial offshore interview with INZ and they meet INZ immigration policy.

In 2013, the New Zealand Government agreed to resettle within the Refugee Quota Programme up to 150 refugees annually who have been subject to Australia's offshore processing legislation. The allocation of these places will be implemented from July 2014.

5. Submission and Processing via Dossier Selection

5.1 Dossier submission policies

The RRF is the standard form that initiates consideration of a dossier case by INZ.

5.2 Case documentation

The INZ requires the following documentation in order to consider a dossier resettlement submission:

- An RRF that has been fully and accurately completed by UNHCR;
- A completed and signed Residence Application for Mandated Refugees;
- Completed RQB general interview questions;
- Birth Certificate or identity document or declaration regarding identity if birth certificate or identity document cannot be provided;
- Police clearance certificate for all applicants aged 17 years and over for all countries in which the applicant has lived for 12 months or more or declaration confirming criminal convictions if police clearance certificates cannot be provided;
- Completed medical certificate;
- A declaration signed by the applicant in agreement to participation in the on-arrival six-week reception programme;
- One passport-size photographs of each applicant;
- Where appropriate, medical reports, Best Interests Determinations (BID), custody documentation and special needs assessments by the UNHCR.

5.3 Routing of submissions

All cases, including emergency cases are routed to the RQB via UNHCR Regional Office in Canberra.

5.4 Processing times

The length of time required to process applications varies according to the category of referral, volume of cases involved and factors relating to the country of origin. Providing RRF is complete and the documentation is in order, processing time ought to be approximately six to eight weeks after the applicant's interview by the RQB. Actual resettlement to New Zealand may occur sometime thereafter, depending on the urgency of the case, intake schedules and other operational factors. Resettlement usually occurs within 12 months of the applicant's interview with the RQB. Emergency resettlement cases are given priority over all other refugee resettlement cases.

5.5 Recourses, appeals

There is no review or appeal process for individuals whose cases have been declined by the RQB. However, the RQB would be prepared to reconsider a case submission from UNHCR provided additional information was forthcoming in support of the case and reasons were given for requesting reconsideration.

5.6. Any other issues regarding dossier submissions

All refugee resettlement applications are considered by the RQB in accordance with established INZ policy and operational guidelines. In certain cases, the RQB may seek advice from other Government departments. Feedback from these sources is taken into consideration in the decision making process.

6. Submissions and Processing via In Country Selection

6.1 Selection mission policies

Selection missions are planned in accordance with the agreed Refugee Quota Programme. The RQB consults with UNHCR on the timing of its selection missions to assist with the preparation of case submissions.

6.2. Case documentation

The RQB requires the following documentation in order to consider a resettlement submission:

- An RRF that has been fully and accurately completed by the UNHCR;
- A completed and signed Residence Application for Mandated Refugees;
- Completed general RQB interview questions;
- Biometric information (fingerprints and photograph);
- Birth Certificate or identity document or declaration regarding identity if birth certificate or identity document cannot be provided;
- Police clearance certificate for all applicants aged 17 years and over for all countries in which the applicant has lived for 12 months or more or declaration confirming criminal convictions if police clearance certificates cannot be provided;
- Completed medical certificate; declaration signed by the applicant in agreement to participation in the on-arrival six-week reception programme;
- One passport-size photographs of each applicant;
- Where appropriate, medical reports, BIDs, custody documentation and special needs assessments by UNHCR.

6.3 Routing of Submissions

All submissions to be interviewed as part of a selection mission must be referred by the UNHCR in accordance with UNHCR resettlement guidelines and priorities. Submissions are forwarded to the RQB via UNHCR Regional Office in Canberra for consideration in the lead-up to a selection mission.

6.4 Processing times

The length of time in processing applications varies according to the category of referral, volume of cases involved and factors relating to the country of origin. Providing the submission is complete and the documentation is in order, processing time ought to be approximately six to eight weeks after the applicant's interview with the RQB. Actual resettlement to New Zealand may occur sometime thereafter, depending on the urgency of the case, intake schedules and other operational factors. Resettlement normally occurs within 12 months of the applicant's interview by the RQB. Emergency resettlement cases are given priority over all other refugee resettlement cases.

6.5 Recourses, appeals

There is no review or appeal process for individuals whose cases have been declined by the RQB. However, the RQB would be prepared to reconsider a case submission from UNHCR provided additional information was forthcoming in support of the case and reasons were given for requesting reconsideration.

6.6 Other details regarding selection missions

All refugee resettlement applications are considered by the RQB in accordance with established INZ policy and operational guidelines. In certain cases, the RQB may seek advice from other Government departments.

7. Emergency Cases/Urgent Cases

7.1 Policies for receiving emergency and/or urgent cases

Emergency and/or Urgent resettlement submissions from the UNHCR are considered under the Priority Protection subcategory. Emergency and/or Urgent resettlement cases are given priority over all other refugee resettlement cases. The degree of urgency is assessed to determine the response time required. Where possible, the RQB aims to issue its decision and undertake resettlement as soon as possible upon receipt of all the necessary documentation from the UNHCR.

The Government of New Zealand offers a limited number of places for emergency resettlement each year. Emergency cases are considered for refugees who are facing imminent life threatening situations, where it is assessed the New Zealand may offer immediate protection. A notional figure of around 35 places is used (including the immediate family of the principal applicant). Emergency resettlement cases are drawn from countries worldwide and not limited to areas where global or regional priorities have been allocated.

7.2 Case documentation for Emergency and/or Urgent cases

Emergency and Urgent submissions from the UNHCR are considered by the RQB on a dossier basis. As with all dossier cases, the RQB requires the following documentation in order to consider a resettlement submission:

- an RRF that has been fully and accurately completed by the UNHCR;
- a completed and signed Application for Consideration for Residence in New Zealand form;
- completed RQB interview questions;
- a declaration signed by the applicant in agreement to participation in the on-arrival six-week orientation programme;
- two passport-size photographs of each applicant ;
- where appropriate, medical reports, BIDs and special needs assessments by the UNHCR.

7.3 Routing of submissions for Emergency and/or Urgent cases

As with all mandated refugee cases submitted by the UNHCR to New Zealand for consideration, Emergency and/or Urgent resettlement cases should be submitted to the RQB via the UNHCR Regional Office in Canberra.

7.4 Processing times for Emergency cases

The RQB advises the UNHCR in Canberra of its decision on cases prioritized as Emergency within 48 hours. The decision may be to reject the case or accept pending health and character checks.

The RQB requires the assistance of the UNHCR with processing Emergency cases by interviewing the applicant with questions provided by the RQB and facilitating completion by applicants of required immigration forms. The UNHCR may also, where necessary, assist with obtaining exit permits and/or obtaining further information relevant to the case as appropriate.

Where only one accepted Emergency resettlement case is current at a given time, the RQB will endeavour to evacuate that case from the country of asylum within three working days, or on the next available flight, after the date when UNHCR is notified that the case is accepted pending health and character checks.

Where more than one accepted Emergency resettlement case is current at a given time, UNHCR will prioritise all such current emergency cases, in consultation with the RQB. The RQB will endeavour to evacuate those cases from the countries of asylum in order of that priority. The RQB will endeavour to evacuate each such case from the country of asylum within three working days of the resettlement of the Emergency case immediately preceding it.

7.5 Processing times for Urgent cases

The RQB will advise the UNHCR in Canberra of its decision on cases prioritized as Urgent within one week. The decision may be to reject the case or accept pending health and character checks.

The RQB requires the assistance of the UNHCR with processing Urgent cases by interviewing the applicant with questions provided by the RQB and facilitating completion by applicants of required RQB forms. The UNHCR may also, where necessary, assist with obtaining exit permits and/or obtaining further information relevant to the case as appropriate.

The RQB will use its best endeavours to resettle any Urgent cases at latest by inclusion in whichever of the six annual Quota intakes next follows the date of acceptance of that case.

7.6 Special considerations regarding Emergency and/or Urgent cases

The RQB will inform the UNHCR as quickly as possible if issues arise that are likely to prevent a decision being made within the relevant timeframe.

8. Special Categories/Special Needs

New Zealand does not have any further quotas for cases with specific needs, beyond those outlined in section 4 above.

9. Medical Requirements

9.1 Screening procedures

From 1 July 2013, all refugees under consideration for inclusion in the New Zealand refugee quota are required to undergo increased medical screening to identify whether they have certain conditions or treatment needs that are considered inadmissible as outlined below:

- requires dialysis treatment
- has severe haemophilia
- has a physical, intellectual, cognitive and/or sensory incapacity that requires full-time care, including care in the community
- currently has any form of tuberculosis (TB) and has not completed full treatment, or
- has a history of diagnostic findings or treatment for multiple drug resistant or extensively drug resistant TB, unless cleared by a New Zealand Respiratory or Infectious Diseases specialist.

All costs associated with the medical screening will be covered by the New Zealand Government.

9.2 Health criteria and exclusion factors, recourse and waivers

Anyone identified as having one of the five conditions or treatment needs as listed above in section 9.1 cannot be selected for inclusion in the Refugee Quota Programme unless they are granted an exception on a case-by-case basis by the Minister of Immigration.

9.3 Pre-departure examination and treatment

Refugees provisionally accepted under the refugee resettlement programme are required to complete health screening offshore for TB and HIV/AIDS. Those found to be TB positive are not declined for resettlement, but their travel is temporarily delayed while they receive treatment to ensure they are fit to travel.² Those refugees with HIV/AIDS are not excluded from being resettled in New Zealand under the Refugee Quota Programme (See Medical/Disabled subcategory at 4.1).

The New Zealand Government covers all costs related to TB and HIV/AIDS screening.

10. Orientation (pre-departure)

10.1 Orientation sessions

INZ has developed a DVD that will be completed in 2013 to provide pre-departure settlement information to those accepted for inclusion under the Refugee Quota Programme. The DVD will provide tailored settlement information about the reality of living in New Zealand to help manage pre-arrival expectations and prepare refugees for living and working in New Zealand. Following completion, the DVD will be available during selection missions and online at the INZ website.

10.2 Other pre-departure preparation

During selection mission interviews basic information about New Zealand is provided to the refugees being considered for inclusion in the under Refugee Quota Programme. A booklet called *'Welcome to New Zealand'* is also provided, which has been translated into the languages most commonly used by the most recent refugee cohorts resettled in New Zealand. The aim of the booklet is to provide basic practical information to prepare refugees for what to expect following their arrival in New Zealand. The booklet covers aspects of New Zealand such as location, climate, languages spoken, government, laws and law enforcement, food and drink, money, travel to New Zealand, the six-week reception programme, housing, employment, health services, education and family reunification.

11. Travel

11.1 Travel booking procedures

Upon acceptance of a case for resettlement the RQB notifies the relevant UNHCR Field Office (copied to UNHCR Canberra).

The Government of New Zealand has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), under which the IOM undertakes to make all travel bookings and complete all necessary pre-departure arrangements for refugees travelling as part of New Zealand's Refugee Quota Programme, including pre-flight medical assessments and exit permission formalities. Under the MoU, IOM arranges for travelling refugees to be safely boarded on flights from countries of refuge and assisted with making connecting flights in transit points.

² Usually approximately eight weeks

With the agreement of RQB, the IOM may also arrange escorts where required for medical or other reasons. Where possible and necessary, the RQB may send an escort officer to accompany the refugees on their journey to New Zealand. This is usually only possible when sizeable numbers of refugees are travelling from the same country of refuge.

11.2 Payment

The Government of New Zealand pays for the travel of refugees accepted under the Refugee Quota Programme. This includes travel from the country of refuge to New Zealand, medical screening, transit costs, exit permit fees and other associated costs. New Zealand also pays all travel costs to centres within New Zealand where the refugees will settle following their initial on-arrival orientation in Auckland. Quota refugees are not required to repay the costs associated with their travel.

11.3 Travel documents issued

For those quota refugees who do not hold national passports, the RQB issues travel documents (New Zealand Certificates of Identity (COI)) endorsed with permanent residence visas as well as Passport Exemption Letters. The RQB dispatches the COIs, along with Passport Exemption Letters, to either UNHCR or IOM in countries of refuge and liaises with them to ensure that the documents are received in time for all travel arrangements and exit formalities to be completed.

12. Status on Arrival and the Path to Citizenship

12.1 Immigration status on arrival

Persons accepted for resettlement to New Zealand under the Refugee Quota Programme are granted Permanent Resident status on arrival. As New Zealand Permanent Residents, they are entitled to live in New Zealand permanently and enjoy the rights extended to other New Zealand Permanent Residents and citizens, in terms of access to education, housing, health care, employment and social welfare.

12.2 Documentation issued, including travel documents

Persons accepted for resettlement to New Zealand under the Refugee Quota Programme may use their COI (the document with which they travelled to and entered New Zealand) as a form of ID for two years from their date of entry into New Zealand. Thereafter, until such time as they qualify to apply for citizenship they are required to obtain other forms of identification, which may include a New Zealand Driver's License or Refugee Travel Document.

12.3 Documents issued to children born after arrival but before naturalization of their parents

As resettled Quota refugees gain Permanent Resident status upon arrival, any children born after arrival automatically gain New Zealand citizenship.

12.4 Requirements for citizenship

After a qualifying period of five years as Permanent Residents, resettled refugees are eligible to apply for New Zealand citizenship.

13. Domestic Settlement and Community Services

13.1 Overview of Services for Resettled Refugees

The reception and integration of resettled refugees is effected through partnerships between Government agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

The New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy

The New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (the Strategy) was approved by the New Zealand Government in 2012. The Strategy is a whole-of-government approach to delivering improved refugee resettlement outcomes so that refugees more quickly achieve self-sufficiency, social integration and independence. It is being implemented progressively from 2013/14 and applies in the first instance to quota refugees arriving in New Zealand after 1 July 2013. The Strategy involves changes to the mix of services to be provided to quota refugees. In particular there will be a stronger focus on employment-related services as part of a wider government agenda to move people off welfare support and into employment.

The overarching outcome for the Strategy is: *Refugees are participating fully and integrated socially and economically as soon as possible so that they are living independently, undertaking the same responsibilities and exercising the same rights as other New Zealanders and have a strong sense of belonging to their own community and to New Zealand.*

This outcome is supported by the following five integration outcomes:

- *Self-sufficiency*: all working-age refugees are in paid work or are supported by a family member in paid work.
- *Participation*: refugees actively participate in New Zealand life and have a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand.
- *Health and wellbeing*: refugees and their families enjoy healthy, safe and independent lives.
- *Education*: refugees' English language skills enable them to participate in education and achieve qualifications, and support them to participate in daily life.
- *Housing*: refugees live independently of government housing assistance in homes that are safe, secure, healthy and affordable.

Progress in improving these integration outcomes will be measured annually against success indicators agreed by the Government.

13.2 Reception and Orientation

Reception Programme

Refugees who arrive in New Zealand under the Refugee Quota Programme spend their first six weeks in the country at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre, based in Auckland where Government agencies and NGOs work in partnership to implement a variety of programmes (Reception programme).

The six-week reception programme at the Centre aims to build basic social and coping skills required for refugees' new lives in New Zealand and provide information on work and expectations of employment. Implementing the Strategy means the reception programme will have a stronger focus on employment services as part of the preparation for all work-age refugees to finding work. Health and mental health assessments and initial treatment, health promotion, settlement planning including orientation to working and living in New Zealand, and education, including English language, will also continue to be key focus areas of the reception programme.

Resettlement Communities

On arrival in the resettlement communities orientation to New Zealand continues with a series of community-based workshops, support for daily living and learn-to-drive programmes.

13.3 Housing

Suitable furnished government-subsidised or private housing is located for quota refugees in their resettlement communities prior to the completion of the six-week reception programme at the Centre.

13.4 Physical and Mental Health

Reception Programme

A government-funded medical clinic (including dentistry) operates at the Centre. This provides medical screening, initial treatment and referral for all quota refugees. Access to specialised medical services outside the clinic is also facilitated. Comprehensive mental health screening, assessments, initial treatment and rehabilitation is also available.

Resettlement Communities

Government health funding authorities also support refugee-specific mental health counselling services, for survivors of torture and trauma, through non-government agencies in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

13.5 Language Training and education

Reception Programme

English language training is provided and supports the employment focus for working-age refugees. Refugee children are also prepared for their introduction into the New Zealand classroom and national curriculum in the resettlement communities. Refugees aged 13-17 years attend secondary classes where their goals and skills are assessed by bilingual tutors for placement in the education system. Refugees aged 65 or older will receive additional English language support with a focus on conversational English and living independently.

Resettlement Communities

Refugee Education Coordinators are employed by the Ministry of Education to work with refugee families, agencies and schools throughout the country.

Government funding is available to enable schools to develop programmes that best meet the identified needs of students from non-English speaking backgrounds. The Government also provides funding to NGOs to provide English language and support services to adult refugees.

13.6 Employment-related training

Government funded support is provided through for example the Tertiary Education Commission which purchases training opportunities for those disadvantaged in the labour market, including refugees. Such training opportunities can include English language courses as well as vocational and life skills training. Similar vocational training and income generating initiatives that focus on the refugees' traditional skills and occupations are funded by some city councils.

13.7 Employment

New Zealand's onshore orientation programme is being redesigned to provide a stronger focus on employment. This will combine the provision of information combined with activities designed to engage working-age refugees in practical preparations for work. Refugees aged 16 and 17 years may also participate in these sessions where this is appropriate (for instance, for those planning to move to work rather than on to tertiary studies).

13.8 Financial Assistance

For the duration of their six-week reception programme at the Centre, quota refugees receive a weekly allowance. On leaving the Centre, they are eligible to receive an applicable benefit at the same rate as benefits provided to unemployed New Zealanders.

In addition, resettled refugees may be eligible for additional assistance, for instance Accommodation Supplements, to help meet their housing costs.

A special settlement grant for re-establishment costs is also provided to assist with acquiring household items such as furniture and white-ware. As with other New Zealand citizens and residents, refugees may be entitled to additional allowances and recoverable grants to assist with finding employment.

13.9 Additional settlement-related information

Settlement Support Services

Settlement Support New Zealand (SSNZ) is a national network set up to direct newcomers (including resettled refugees) and their families to services they might need during their first years in New Zealand, and is delivered in 19 locations around the country. The SSNZ services are provided through a collaborative approach involving central Government (through the MBIE), local authorities and NGOs as appropriate to each location. The initiative focuses on better co-ordinated delivery of settlement advice and information at a local level, and on improving the responsiveness of local services to the needs of newcomers.

Building New Communities

The Office of Ethnic Affairs (OEA) supports refugee resettlement by providing a referral and information service for ethnic communities, and policy advice to government. The OEA also operates Language Line, a telephone interpreting service with 41 languages that is available for key Government departments to use when communicating with speakers of other languages.

Cultural Diversity

The constitutional framework of New Zealand places great importance on respect for peoples' cultural, ethnic, racial and religious differences and their right to participate equally in society. The rights of resettled refugees are protected by New Zealand law, which covers all forms of discrimination and racism and upholds peoples' rights and freedoms of speech, religious belief and political opinion. Specific bodies such as the Human Rights Commission, Office of the Race Relations Conciliator, refugee councils and incorporated associations also support the rights and interests of resettled refugees. Increasingly, local councils are appointing ethnic community co-ordinators to facilitate understanding of ethnic and racial diversity and to provide assistance and support to ethnic communities on a range of matters.

14. Family Reunification of Refugees

Family reunification is recognised as an important part of New Zealand's refugee policies. However, it is acknowledged that there is a consistently high level of demand for family reunification from resettled refugees that cannot be met through the Refugee Quota Programme alone.

14.1 National definition of family

Under the Refugee Quota Programme, immediate family is defined as 'spouse and dependent children' and these are the only members which may be considered for inclusion in the Refugee Quota Programme without a referral from UNHCR – providing they were declared during the refugee's initial offshore interview with the RQB.

14.2 Legislation regarding rights and restrictions to family reunification

Eligibility of family members of resettled refugees

Resettled quota refugees who declare their spouse and/or children during their initial offshore interview with the RQB can usually sponsor them through the Refugee Quota Programme. Their cases must be considered in line with INZ immigration policy.

Resettled quota refugees who have non-immediate family members that they would like included in the Refugee Quota Programme are unable to sponsor them through the Refugee Quota Programme. New Zealand does not advocate or solicit referrals from the UNHCR on behalf of non-immediate family in New Zealand. The final decision with regard to referral for resettlement to New Zealand lies with the UNHCR.

As Permanent Residents of New Zealand resettled quota refugees who wish to sponsor other relatives (parents, fiancés, etc.) to come to New Zealand have several options under other immigration categories. They may apply to sponsor family through the RFSC, or other non-refugee specific categories.

Eligibility of family members of persons granted asylum

Once they have been granted Permanent Resident in New Zealand approved asylum seekers who wish to sponsor relatives (immediate family, parents, fiancés, etc.) to come to New Zealand have several options under a number of immigration categories. They may apply to sponsor family through the RFSC, or other non-refugee specific categories.

Approved asylum seekers may not sponsor family through the Refugee Quota Programme, but their family members may be considered for inclusion in the programme if their cases are referred to New Zealand by UNHCR.

14.3 Family reunification cases and the resettlement quotas

Immediate family of quota refugees (i.e., spouse and dependent children) approved for inclusion in the Refugee Quota Programme are counted within the quota of 750 persons. Family members approved under all other immigration categories are not.

14.4 Routing of submissions

As with all RRFs submitted to New Zealand, UNHCR referrals for cases of non-immediate family members should be routed through the UNHCR Regional Office in Canberra.

14.5 Case documentation

For cases which are referred by UNHCR and being considered for inclusion in the Refugee Quota Programme, RQB requires the following documentation in order to consider a resettlement submission:

- An RRF that has been fully and accurately completed by UNHCR;
- A completed and signed Residence Application for Mandated Refugees;
- Completed RQB general interview questions;
- Biometric information (fingerprints and photograph);
- Birth Certificate or identity document or declaration regarding identity if birth certificate or identity document cannot be provided;
- Police clearance certificate for all applicants aged 17 years and over for all countries in which the applicant has lived for 12 months or more or declaration confirming criminal convictions if police clearance certificates cannot be provided;
- Completed medical certificate;
- A declaration signed by the applicants in agreement to participating in the six week on-arrival reception programme;

- One passport-size photographs of each applicant;
- Where appropriate, medical reports, Best Interests Determinations, custody documentation and special needs assessments by UNHCR.

In cases of immediate family (non-UNHCR referred) being considered for inclusion in the Refugee Quota Programme, RQB requires the following documentation in order to consider a resettlement submission:

- A completed and signed Residence Application for Refugee Quota Family Reunification;
- Completed RQB interview questions;
- Biometric information (fingerprints and photograph);
- Birth Certificate or identity document or declaration regarding identity if birth certificate or identity document cannot be provided;
- Police clearance certificate for all applicants aged 17 years and over for all countries in which the applicant has lived for 12 months or more or declaration confirming criminal convictions if police clearance certificates cannot be provided;
- Completed medical certificate;
- A declaration signed by the applicants in agreement to participation in the six week on-arrival reception programme;
- One passport-size photographs of each applicant;
- Where appropriate, medical reports, evidence of identity and evidence of legal custody

14.6 Processing times

Each family reunification case is considered individually, and every effort is made to reunite separated family members; however, due to the individual circumstances of each case no generic timeframe can be given.

14.7 Entitlements for family members

Family members approved for resettlement through the Refugee Quota Programme have the same entitlements as other Quota refugees i.e., their travel is paid for and they gain Permanent Residence status upon arrival.

Family members approved as Permanent Residents under all other Immigration categories must fund their own travel, but also gain Permanent Residence status upon arrival.

14.8 Other immigration channels available for family reunification

Generally, refugees who have relatives in New Zealand and who do not qualify for resettlement in accordance with the UNHCR resettlement criteria must apply for residence under standard Immigration categories, which include:

- Refugee Family Support Category
- Partnership Category
- Parent Category
- Dependent Child Category

To sponsor relatives under the Parent category sponsors must have been a New Zealand resident or citizen for a period of three years.

Under each of the categories above, applicants must meet health and character requirements, applicants/sponsors are responsible for funding the application process and travel and sponsors must undertake to ensure that financial support and accommodation is provided to, if necessary, for the applicants' first 24 months as a resident in New Zealand.

Refugee Family Support Category

In recognition of the fact that it is often difficult for family members of refugees to meet the eligibility requirements of normal immigration policy, the Refugee Family Support Category (RFSC) is a specific policy that allows extended family members of refugees in New Zealand to apply for Permanent Residence. The RFSC is limited to 300 places per year.

The RFSC aims to support successful resettlement of refugees resident in New Zealand, by providing them with the opportunity to sponsor family members who do not qualify for residence under any other INZ immigration category. The RFSC has a two tier registration system. Priority is given to tier one sponsors.

Eligibility requirements and restrictions

For resettled refugees to qualify as a tier one sponsor they must have no 'immediate family' (partner, parent, non-dependent child) living lawfully and permanently in New Zealand, or, they must be the 'sole-carer' of a 'dependent relative' in New Zealand; and have no other 'family member' eligible to be sponsored for residence under any other Immigration residence category.

Tier one sponsors may register to sponsor their parents, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, adult sibling, or adult child, and their immediate family (spouse and dependent children).

Under Tier two, which is not currently operational, sponsors need not be alone in New Zealand nor prove that they are a sole-carer of a dependent relative. Tier two was opened for a three day period in April 2012 and sufficient registrations were received to fill the available residence places until approximately 2016/2017.

Support provided to family members on arrival

Under the RFSC sponsors/applicants are responsible for funding the application process and travel. They are exempt however, from providing evidence of funds for maintenance and accommodation upon arrival. Instead, sponsors must undertake to ensure that accommodation is provided, if necessary, for the applicants' first 24 months as a resident in New Zealand, and those approved Permanent Resident Status may, where necessary, apply for financial assistance upon arrival.

15. References/Resources

<http://dol.govt.nz/research/>

Government-funded research related to refugee resettlement in New Zealand.

<http://www.immigration.govt.nz/>

Immigration New Zealand website

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2009/0051/latest/DLM1440303.html>

Immigration Act 2009