



HOUSING  
RIGHTS GUIDE  
**EMERGENCY  
HOUSING**



**DON'T LET THE GOVERNMENT  
COLONIZE YOUR FUTURE. IT IS  
YOUR RIGHT AS A HUMAN  
BEING TO HAVE A SAFE  
PLACE TO CALL HOME.**

NEW ZEALAND HAS SIGNED  
THE UNIVERSAL  
DECLARATION OF HUMAN  
RIGHTS. BECAUSE OF THIS  
OUR GOVERNMENT IS  
OBLIGED TO FOLLOW IT.  
ARTICLE 25 SAYS THAT:

## #1

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of ... [their] family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond ...[their] control.

## #2

Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.



According to the government, you are homeless when:

1.) At night-time, you are sleeping outside, sleeping in a tent anywhere (not on holiday), sleeping in a garage or sleeping in a car

OR

2.) In emergency accommodation, funded/subsidised by MSD or a community housing provider as 'emergency' or 'transitional' accommodation

### OVER 18?

(You do not need to be on a benefit.) You can apply for and receive EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION.

### 16 OR 17 YEARS OLD?

You must be getting a YOUTH PAYMENT. WINZ must refer you to an appropriate provider of youth emergency accommodation (varies regionally). If there is a problem, contact YOUTHLINE.

# HELP WITH HOUSING FROM THE GOVERNMENT



## IF YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE PAYING RENT OR MORTGAGE.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT AT WINZ TO APPLY FOR THE ACCOMMODATION SUPPLEMENT AND TEMPORARY ADDITIONAL SUPPORT (EVEN IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED). THIS IS BASED ON YOUR INCOME SO YOU MAY OR MAY NOT QUALIFY.

## IF YOU ARE HOMELESS:

AND OVER 18 APPLY AT WINZ FOR A SPECIAL NEEDS GRANT FOR EMERGENCY ACCOMODATION.

VALID FOR 7 DAYS BUT RENEWABLE.

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OR 16-17 YEARS OLD, YOU MUST BE GETTING THE YOUTH PAYMENT.

WINZ WILL FIND YOU YOUTH EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION



## IF YOU CAN'T AFFORD MARKET RENTALS

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT AT WINZ FOR A HOUSING ASSESSMENT. IF YOU SCORE A OR B YOU WILL BE PUT ON THE LIST FOR PUBLIC HOUSING (HOUSING NEW ZEALAND OR COMMUNITY HOUSING PROVIDERS)

# HOW TO GET EMERGENCY HOUSING

**1.)** Make an appointment at Work and Income to apply for a **Special Needs Grant for Emergency Accommodation** (a seven day renewable grant). This is a free grant. If you are 16-17 years old you must be receiving the **Youth Payment**. WINZ is required to put this in place for you on the day you appear at the WINZ office. WINZ must refer you to the emergency accommodation provider for Young People (contact Youthline if you have any problems 0800376633 or Free txt 234).

**2.)** Remember that WINZ only considers people **homeless** when they are **in a tent, car, sleeping in the street or in a garage**. If you are sleeping on a family member or friend's couch this is also a state of homelessness, but WINZ may say you have "adequate shelter for the time being". If you have nowhere to stay the day you go in, you are homeless.

**3.)** The **Special Needs Grant for Emergency Accommodation** is valid for 7 days only. You must reapply every time it expires. When you first apply it's a good idea to immediately make an appointment to re-apply for the next grant on the 5th or 6th day so that you don't miss out.

**4.)** If you are a family with children under 17, WINZ must put you in a motel or with a community housing provider (CHP). If WINZ wants to put you in a motel, they must phone around to find a motel for you. If they refuse, or try to make you phone to receive quotes, contact AAAP immediately.

If you are referred to a community housing provider, the provider may want you to sign a contract. You do not need to sign the contract if you are unsure. You may want to contact AAAP or a community law centre/or other advocate to check it. Stand your ground, demand a non-recoverable grant for the first 7 days to give yourself time to think and get advice.

**5.)** If you are **single or a couple**, you may be asked to find a hostel or boarding house. WINZ must give you a list of places to phone. If you can't find a place, then WINZ must find you a place in a motel or with a community housing provider. If WINZ says "motels are only for families" this is unlawful discrimination under **The Human Rights Act**. Contact AAAP if they refuse and you can contact the Humanitarian Rights Commission and make a complaint.

**6.)** If the emergency accommodation is **not safe or healthy**, go back to WINZ and complain and ask for different accommodation (you may want a support person to come along). If the case manager argues with you, you can show them the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (find on page 3).

## WHAT THEY SAY:

## WHAT YOU SAY:

1

"I'll book you a telephone appointment for your housing assessment. It'll be much quicker!"

1

"No. I want a face to face appointment."

2

"What's your address?"

2

"I'm homeless. I have no fixed abode."

3

"We'll give you a 7 day emergency housing grant but **you** need to find yourself a motel."

3

"Sorry! I thought that was your job."

4

"If you turn this down, we'll take you off the list."

4

The boarding house you sent me to is unsafe and filthy. That's against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I'm going to call an advocate!

# HOW TO GET ON THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT'S HOUSING REGISTER IF YOU ARE HOMELESS

**1.)** Make an appointment with WINZ to appear in person for a **Housing Assessment**. This is how you can get a long term **social housing placement**. If WINZ suggests a phone appointment, you will not be able to provide as much evidence and may get an inaccurate housing rating.

If you have appointed a family member as an **agent**, you don't have to go to the appointment. Your family member can do it for you. There is an "Appointment of an Agent" form on the MSD website AAAP advocated cannot act as agents.

If you have no agent and are not feeling confident going it alone, take a friend, family member or support person to take notes as this is important evidence for you to keep. Be sure to keep in regular contact with your housing assessment officer at MSD.

**2.)** MSD will ask you many questions. When they ask for an address, say "**no fixed abode**". A good way to keep in touch with MSD is to have an email address or through MyMSD. You can access your emails for free at a local library, even if you are not a member. **This is extremely important because if MSD cannot get in contact with you, you may lose the offer of the property and may be removed from the housing register.**

# HOW TO GET ON THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT'S HOUSING REGISTER IF YOU ARE HOMELESS

## **3.) Take evidence of your situation to WINZ:**

-Letters/emails from people who know you have been homeless and for how long.

-Photos of your situation – your bedding on the street, in the car or garage; physical injuries from living on the street, such as ulcers and sores.

-Medical information, such as a letter from your doctor saying how homelessness is affecting your mental and physical health. A doctor can specify that you need to be living alone in a flat or boarding house if that is what you need.

-If you have been staying in someone's garage or on their floor or couch, take a letter from them saying you can't stay there anymore.

-Police reports if you are experiencing violence, threats, and/or have had items stolen.

## HOW TO GET ON THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT'S HOUSING REGISTER IF YOU ARE HOMELESS

- 4.)** If you consume any illegal substances, you don't have to tell the case manager. However, the government has acknowledged that drug and alcohol issues are HEALTH issues and that it's easier to deal with them when people are in safe accommodation.
- 5.)** If you have convictions, MSD and Corrections share a database so they will know about these. You can talk about how homelessness has contributed to these convictions.
- 6.)** WINZ will ask you if you have been looking for private accommodation. Tell WINZ you have been to real estate agents (name them), looked in the newspaper and online. Tell them you have been turned down in favour of other people. **DO NOT** say you did not have the bond or money to pay the rent because WINZ gives advances for these. They are required to put you in an appropriate place to address all your medical needs.
- 7.)** If WINZ asks why you can't stay with relatives, say that this is not an option. You do not need to give relatives' contact details or explain any further.

## **COMMUNITY HOUSING PROVIDERS (CHP):**

WINZ SHOULD REFER YOU TO AN APPROPRIATE CHP. YOU CAN GO TO YOUR LOCAL CHP IN PERSON IF NECESSARY. HERE IS WHERE YOU CAN ACCESS THE LIST:

[WWW.COMMUNITYHOUSING.ORG.NZ/MEMBERS/MEMBERS-DIRECTORY](http://WWW.COMMUNITYHOUSING.ORG.NZ/MEMBERS/MEMBERS-DIRECTORY)



## **HOUSING ADVOCACY:**

TENANTS PROTECTION ASSOCIATION - [TPA.ORG.NZ](http://TPA.ORG.NZ), 03 379-2297

AUCKLAND NUMBER: (09) 360 1473

CHRISTCHURCH NUMBER: (03) 379 2297



## **OTHER SUPPORT:**

LIFELINE – 0800 543 354 OR FREE TEXT 4357

YOUTHLINE - [YOUTHLINE.CO.NZ](http://YOUTHLINE.CO.NZ), 0800 376633 OR FREE TEXT 234

AAAP - [AAAP.ORG.NZ](http://AAAP.ORG.NZ), 09 634 0591

SUICIDE CRISIS HELPLINE – 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)

HEALTHLINE – 0800 611 116

SAMARITANS – 0800 726 666

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU - [CAB.ORG.NZ](http://CAB.ORG.NZ), 0800 367 222

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION- 0800 496 877

